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ABSTRACT

This booklet is a compilation of articles from a column in the "Warner Center News" written by an experienced early childhood educator on various topics related to child care. The brief articles describe the problems and pleasures that preschool children bring to child care centers, homes, markets, and malls. The articles are grouped into four sections: (1) "The Problems and Pleasures of Preschool"; (2) "Growing Up and Getting Smarter"; (3) "Easier Ways with Kids Everywhere"; and (4) "Holidays and Hot Issues." Examples of articles in the first section are "Dragging In and Hurrying Out of Child Care," "Get Me to My Work on Time," and "Helping the Five Something Child Wait for Kindergarten." In the second section are articles such as "Show and Tell Time in Preschool," "Warriors on the Preschool Playground," "Men in Child Care Centers," and "The Truly Liberated Courageous Mother's Thanksgiving." Articles in the third section include "Shopping with Children in Malls and Markets," "Terrific Twos with Terrible Tempers," "Going Broke from Birthday Parties," and "Out of Diapers and into Underwear." The last section contains articles such as "Art for Art's Sake and Stain Remover for Mom's Sake," "Running Noses and Running Children," and "Downsizing Christmas." (EV)

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WINNING AT CHILD CARING:

Easier ways with young children in child care centers, homes and malls.

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All suggestions made in this book are meant to be used under the supervision of qualified staff.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to the welfare of young children.

BETTE SIMONS left the University Laboratory School at California State University, Northridge, to have her own child care center. When she is frustrated or pleased about some issue concerning preschool children, she writes about it. She has been published in either local papers or Parents and preschoolers Newsletter for twelve years. This book is a collection of some of the articles she has written.

Bette holds a master's degree in child development and family relations. She also holds little children, including two grandsons.

Bette has lived a long time and probably knows what she is talking about . . . since she has had so many teachers to learn from: children, their parents, colleagues, fellow teachers, and her own family. Read how she helps you see the problems and pleasures that preschool children bring in child care centers, homes, markets or malls.

WINNING AT CHILD CARING:

Easier ways with young children in child care centers, homes and malls.

BETTE SIMONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Problems And Pleasures Of Preschool

Preparing to share the caring 1
Dragging in and hurrying out of child care 2
Get me to my work on time 3
Finding and understanding the fine print 4
Safety first fun second 5
Getting miffed and wanting to move 6
Helping the five something child wait for kindergarten 7
Being well remembered 8

Growing Up And Getting Smarter

Show and tell time in preschool 10
Warriors on the playground 11
Space scientists in the preschool 12
Getting chewed up in child care 14
The bad language other people's children use in child care centers 15
The truly liberated courageous mother's Thanksgiving 16
Lice aren't nice 17
The 4 C's that come before the 3 R's 18
Bugged 19
Preschoolers and pets 20
Men in child care centers 21
Sand and the psyche 23
Safe and not sorry 24
When a teacher leaves 26
The right way to writing and reading 27

Easier Ways With Kids Everywhere

Shopping with children in malls and markets 28
Terrific twos with terrible tempers 29
The clinging child 30

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Going broke from birthday parties 32
Good children and bad manners 34
How to be a super parent after the week's separation 35
Habits-happy and horrible 36
Why Johnny can't giggle 38
Discipline 101 for parents of preschoolers 40
Limits 41
Out of diapers and into underwear 42
Save the world/spank a child 44
Just say no over and over 45
The hard part about loving in the family 46
Do little children hate preschool? 47
Soft hearts but tight fists 48
Adopting new attitudes about adopting 50
The meaning of the meanness of twos 51
Are you scaring your little child? 52
Feeling guilty about day care 54

Holidays and Hot Issues

Art for art's sake and stain remover for mom's sake 55
Big bodies/brown eyes 56
Wet beds 57
Running noses and running children 59
Dreams 60
For crying out loud 62
Downsizing Christmas 64
Early consistent care vs crime 65
Sometimes terrific parents have terrible kids 66
Newer thoughts about discipline 68
Setting holiday standards early 69
Color me creative 70
Everyone learns in a school community 71
The children's clothes circuit in preschools 72

THE PROBLEMS AND PLEASURES OF PRESCHOOL

PREPARING TO SHARE THE CARING

Never mind about the good old days, when moms wore aprons, made a lot of jello molds and didn't have computers. Today can be good too. Sharing the care of your young child can enrich his or her life. But getting started getting help is hard--like when a parent leaves a child care center with the tearful sound of 'Don't go daddy!'

Do families have to have broken hearts if they use child care services because they will have broken budgets if someone stays home with the child? No. A good separation plan helps your child gain independence and relieves your guilt.

If you have found quality child care, you will not be told to just leave your child the first day of the enrollment. This is like throwing a child in a lake and saying swim or drown. Being abandoned is the greatest fear of a young child. Take the adjustment part slowly and don't be grim about it, because children need to feel your confidence about what's happening.

Highlights of a good separation plan:

- Visit with your child more than once before enrolling
- Bring a camera to take a picture of his or her teacher
- Bring a snapshot of the family to leave at school
- Sit on a chair and stay there so your child knows where to find you while exploring
- Learn the names of some of the children and other teachers
- Ask the school if the teacher will do a home visit

If a parent takes too much time staying with a child, there's no chance to relate to other children or the teacher, but if a parent rushes too quickly, especially with a young child, the child is devastated and recovery is slow.

If a child seems very content with separating, plan in two weeks to stay on that chair a while, because the newness of things has worn off.

Create a goodbye ritual, like honking your horn three times, or waving at the gate. If you know that your child knows the teacher, and a few other children, and you have seen the child engaged in play, you can leave the child and say to the storm that ensues, "It's ok to cry a little." It is a sad adjustment, but the family's need is important.

Some children react with anger. Don't get mad. Stay calm, firm and empathic. Anger helps a child feel more in control of events than crying does.

It's best not to say, you don't really want to go but you have to. Model a positive attitude. It pays off in the long run. Promising treats at pickup time might condition children to make a daily fuss.

Promise instead, playtime together. Have an attitude of confidence about

what's happening, even though you may cry yourself as you drive away.

Leaving a child to be shared with others during the day is the end of one period of your life and the beginning of another. It takes courage on the part of the parent to see a child cry. No good teacher would allow a parent to disappear to avoid this scene, as it would destroys trust. Be brave. Good times are ahead.

DRAGGING IN AND HURRYING OUT OF PRESCHOOL

It's as bad as being told not to watch so much TV. But it really helps children in child care, if parents will get up early enough to get children to their programs on time.

If you are not scheduled to do anything early, it is so tempting to let a little child sleep late and have a nice unrushed morning before heading to the child care center. But children who habitually come after a group has formed are at a disadvantage.

It's not just that a favorite toy is already in use, but the best friend from yesterday may already have decided someone else is his best buddy. It makes for a squirmy or squally separation.

If the group has already had circle time, a late child has missed out on songs, stories, announcements and the experience of sharing in a group.

The 10 o'clock scholar is usually a sad cookie and mom or dad have not gotten their dollar's worth of the enriching benefits a child care experience provides.

If a late arrival is unavoidable, it's good to prepare the child in the car on the way. "Tell me what happens first at school. What happens next? What happens last? What will you do soon?" Tell your child what fun it was to be with her and plan to have another lazy morning soon (preferably on Saturday). After all it was fun not to be hurried.

There are also those days when every one is in a rush and picking the child up from child care goes at the tempo of the opening scene in ER. A child might have worked all day to get a child to play, or be in the midst of getting the scissors to work at last. Grabbing and running is like interrupting the world series on TV. It's best to talk your way into a child's program skillfully. "Boy, that's a great hideout. I'll bet you guys would like to sleep in that! I'll get your things so you can have five more minutes there."

Dragging in and hurrying out of your child's daytime experiences can't always be helped, but there's always time to think about expressing the problems it presents sympathetically.

GET ME TO MY WORK ON TIME

It's already 8:30. Your shoe has some cereal on it and you don't know what the child has left on your shoulder but it's time to get to your child care provider. The business of taking your child to someone else for care may be one of the most stressful events parents of young children face each day.

Clocks, timers and tunes make the first business of the day go smoother.

Knowing your stuff makes it easier. This means understanding the development of children, and realizing, for example, that infants and young child feel a parent's stress. They hear anxiety in voices and feel tenseness in arms, even if you are clenching your teeth, trying not to be impatient.

Here are two ideas for leaving home easier with your little ones:

1. Preschool children should learn about clocks, whether or not you have to punch one. Clocks let us know where we need to be and when. It's a fact of life, so give your preschooler an alarm clock. Let the clock signal it's time to get up. He or she can't argue with it, and learning to turn it off helps build competency.

After clothes are on and breakfast is finished, let children do what they are allowed to do while you get ready, but set a timer, that tells when it's time to stop.

2. Whether morning departures for work involve infants or preschoolers, believe it or not, you'll reveal less stress and things will move more easily, if you sing. Yes. Sing anything you want to say to your child in the morning. Don't worry about knowing songs. Use any tune from The Yellow Submarine to Mary Has A Little Lamb to sing, "We're going off to preschool. Hang onto your lunchbox."

Babies may love their Care Givers in family home day care. Preschoolers may look forward to seeing their teachers and friends in their child care center. Still young ones feel reluctant about leaving a parent in the morning. It pays to get in tune with this and relax yourself. Make moving out of the house more efficient, even with a diaper bag in your teeth and baby doing something awful to the lapel of your suit. Clocks, timers and tunes make the first business of the day go smoother.

FINDING GOOD CHILD CARE AND UNDERSTANDING FINE PRINT

Expect some surprises when you enroll your child in a child care center. Some are good surprises, like finding your child's language skills soar. Some are bad surprises, like realizing how sad you can feel about leaving your child on this first step to independence. You can also feel exasperated because the adjustment takes more time than you want to give it.

Then too, whenever money is exchanged for services, there can be some misunderstandings. State laws often require child care centers to put important information about policies in writing. And parents should not be too busy to read them.

Most regulations protect your child. For example, parents entering a child in the preschool each day must present the child to a teacher for a health check and then sign the child in. If there is no signature saying a preschool child is present for the day, your child is not legally covered by insurance in case of accidents. The licensing agencies that inspect schools each year want to see sign-in sheets that have the full signature of any person who removed the child from the center.

Some regulations protect the child care center's budget, if you drop out of the preschool.

Some regulations protect the child care center's budget, if you drop out of the preschool. You need to know what happens to the funds you may have paid in advance. Did you have to give a written notice to get reimbursed? Is there a charge for being late? May you make up days that you miss and what do you do about vacation times?

In the work of integrating a child into a center, parents may not take time to read all the regulations, then when the child is adjusted, it would be hard on him or her to be withdrawn if there are procedures the parent does not want to live with.

Most child care centers will charge for overtime and charge a late fee for late payments. Some centers ask for payments to be made every four weeks, others monthly, or weekly.

Parents new to child care are often annoyed that a child's clothes, lunch boxes, even shoes may get lost. A facility can only suggest marking the child's name on everything.

Sometimes there are so many forms to fill out, it can feel like going through escrow. But schools need emergency numbers, the names of people who are allowed to pick up your child and what allergies your child may have. Some states may require the facility to give you the phone number of the licensing agency if you want to report a violation of the law.

Take time to understand a child care center's agreement with you. You don't want to fill out all those papers again somewhere else.

SAFETY FIRST FUN SECOND

"It's your child's nursery school," says someone handing you the phone at work. Who among us does not have a moment of worry? When we leave children in the care of others, we want them to be safe.

It's good to know that children who are allowed to take mild risks, climbing, jumping, running or hanging are really learning to be safe.

When you hear "Your child just wants to talk to you," it"s a great relief. Being able to talk with your child during the day is a plus for emotional safety. Cordless phones make this an easy feature for any child care provider.

But how do we know an environment is physically safe? Every State in the US has regulations about things such as play equipment, the supervision of children, the spacing of resting cots or the temperature of tap water. Using licensed facilities that are inspected annually is a must.

Besides this, it's good to know that children who are allowed to take mild risks, climbing, jumping running or hanging are really learning to be safe. They are developing and testing their skills. That's why it's important to have lots of outside time for children.

Alert and experienced teachers don't lift children onto equipment. They know children need to figure out how to get up and how to get down.

Here is a good list of safety measures:

- Children wash their hands before eating and toileting
- Wading pools have 1 Tbl clorex in the summer
- Sunscreen is put on children in the summer
- Extra dry socks and clothes are required in winter
- Children are allowed to have a place to run
- Teachers stand close to high climbing children
- Toys are washed regularly
- Entrance gates are safely latched
- A sanitary water drinking system is available
- There are enough wheel toys
- Teachers are always alert

Telling a child he or she is a safe child when you notice caution being taken about potential danger is preferable to sucking in your breath or seeming worried. Children who get the idea that there is danger around them may get timid about developing the very skills they need to be safe, strong and healthy.

GETTING MIFFED AND WANTING TO MOVE

Young children have their ups and downs in child care away from home. Just when parents have a good feeling because there are no more tears at morning drop off time and it's hard to get a child to stop playing and get in the car at pick up time, events can come along to make children complain about something.

Never mind Mondays. The child who said, "Can I go to school today?" at 6:00 am on Sunday can get into a tantrum over putting on shoes when Monday does arrive.

Withdrawing a child without talking problems over at the child care center makes staff roll their eyes.

Besides the adjustment that leaving the weekend entails there are those complaints that go: "No one will play with me. He calls me a baby. I hate cranberry juice for snack. Teacher makes me stay on my cot at rest time."

When the litany of complaints seems constant, parents may start scanning the yellow pages for a new preschool.

Withdrawing a child without talking problems over at the child care center makes staff roll their eyes.

Teachers may feel a child is thriving, but hear parents picking up children with the question, "Did you have a good day?" Then, "No? Well let's go get a treat." Too bad teachers can't give parents some time outs for bad conditioning. Children can learn to push the buttons of busy parents as fast as they can work a computer keyboard.

But what about, "He bit me," or evidence that a child is generally unhappy all the time? A caring parent wants to know a child is thriving, not suffering, in child care.

The trouble may be that in any group of children there are some bullies or difficult little people that sap a teacher's time. Some children do find themselves unable to cope with this.

A wise parent might talk with the director, or visit the child's room. A talk with a counselor might give the parent ideas for guiding the child's growing social competence. Making a friend of a difficult child while giving a child support in managing a hard relationship might turn things around and teach valuable life-long skills.

Child care centers may have faults other than some enrollments that make life in group care a challenge: Teachers who bench too much or not enough — a high teacher turnover. If the situation seems unreconcilable, a new center may be the answer.

Sometimes the adjustment of going to a new preschool is hard. The child has to learn who all the teachers are, where the toilet is, what play equipment can't be jumped from and who grabs a trike if it isn't being watched. It's likely, however that a child has learned something by having made an adjustment to child care before.

It's a good idea for a parent to find at least two new preschools that are acceptable, and involve the child in helping to choose one. It's also smart not to leave the old place with bad feelings. A child had good experiences as well as the bad ones. The same may be true at the next school.

Endings are beginnings, and celebrating the new adventure with a treat shouldn't make anyone's eyes roll.

HELPING THE FIVE SOMETHING CHILD WAIT FOR KINDERGARTEN

Around five something, children in preschools show they are ready for kindergarten. They make wobbly letters that look like their names, know which teacher will let them play with the water and which one won't. They pump themselves on the swing, avoid bullies and help little kids if they feel like it.

Even though fives are an elated bunch, wise parents know children need more than new school shoes while waiting for kindergarten to start.

It's common for fives to believe they should know how to read when starting kindergarten. Parents can tell them that even though some children may have started reading, the teacher is there to teach everyone when they are ready.

Others may be discouraged to learn that the name they are so proud to write in capitols, is rightly written with lower case letters following a capital. Young children often draw their names rather than truly write them. Parents can be ready to say, "There's the preschool way to write your name and the kindergarten way. Now you are learning another way."

What makes children successful in grade school is not how fast they learn things but how they behave, so they are open to learning. Every child needs to know that pay attention means to look at the teacher's face and listen to her, not the buzzing of other children in a group that the teacher is talking to.

If the first day of school turns out to be stressful rather than exhilarating, it's good to remind a child that they have done other hard things--like gotten used to preschool, babysitters or the dentist.

Parents need to be reminded that children are going to school, not a job interview. Clothes need to tolerate the chalk, paints, white glue and marking pens children will be using to learn and do things.

Schools are eager to let parents know they are doing their job in teaching children, so it's likely that even a kindergarten child will have "homework" to do. Parents can keep alive a child's excitement about school if homework remains a happy challenge. That means setting aside a time for homework, just as there is a time for a television program, and a time to read the night time story to the child.

Those new school shoes for the kindergarten bound, often mean a new experience for parents as well.

BEING WELL REMEMBERED

Good child care centers like to think of themselves as a kind of extended family for the parents they serve. It's a privilege to be part of a young child's life. But no one says it's not hard work.

Sometime child care workers make mistakes. A teacher may get so stressed with a child's disruptive behavior, she stops looking to catch the child doing the right thing. She may forget to say hello to a child shyly returning from an illness. But she won't ever forget having been a part of a young child's life.

> Some parents leave a child care center with tears in their eyes and a gift book for the library table.

Children may forget a teachers name, but not the self confidence they learned because a teacher persisted with "Use your words!" to fend off being bullied. They will have a greater sense of security because the opening teacher was always there for them on cold dark winter days when they were the first ones in school.

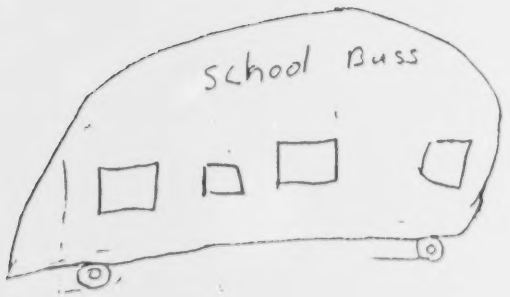
Teachers may want to forget the parents who demand they find the jacket a child lost that never had a name written on it. They hope to recover from the parent who is full of complaints, when staff has spent so much time wiping away the child's tears, or rubbing his back for comfort at rest time.

It's easier to leave a place one doesn't like then one that is loved. Sometimes parent's growing grumpiness means they are preparing to withdraw a child.

Maybe they are moving, have found a cheaper facility, or can't face a conference with the director about a problem.

Teachers love remembering parents who express their gratitude for their child's care, who make them laugh, who listen to what a teacher's experiences with children have taught them, and who don't get mad if they come late and have to pay for it.

Some parents leave a child care center with tears in their eyes and a gift book for the library table. They come back to visit with their long legged children and their fond memories. Like all families, the extended family that represents the child care center will have it's differences and its deep devotions.



SHOW AND TELL TIME IN PRESCHOOL

Parents know when it's Show and Tell Day at preschool. That's the day you can be sure you will be later to work than usual.

Children love taking a toy to school and may have a hard time deciding on one. If you want to get moving, you may have to fill up the car and hope the child will choose while you are on the way to the child care center.

Some schools call Show and Tell day Share Day, but most children will do anything but share their precious possession with someone else.

Show and tell is supposed to be a chance for children to express themselves to the group, but teachers often find a child faces the group, totally speechless, while holding a doll.

"What can we do to improve this 'bring and brag time'?" says a teacher at staff meeting. To make the experience of sharing something from home manageable, many teachers will have a share box and ask children to store their things there after Show and Tell, until it's time to go home. Otherwise, taking all those toys out onto the play yard can make it seem like feeding time in the primate's cage at the zoo.

Some teachers ask parents to help make sharing educational. They want children to bring something that is related to learning. If it's yellow day, find something yellow to bring, If it's gardening day, find a flower and tell the name of it. It's not as much fun as showing the latest transformer doll, but it keeps things calmer in the classroom.

A teacher may also make the day a true sharing day and make it clear children should only bring something they are willing to put out on a share table for anyone in the class to play with. Mothers have to be sure junior didn't bring the ceramic Peter Rabbit grandma got in England.

Show and tell is supposed to be a chance for children to express themselves to the group, but teacher often finds a child faces the group, totally speechless, while holding a doll. The teacher has to narrate like she is on the shopping channel. She dreams of children's Show and Tell time being a little more like the academy awards.

Little children's words don't always come out too fast, but bringing something

from home to school seems universally comforting to them, so sharing days abound in preschools.

Some schools go a step further and let children take something from school to share at home.

A preschool may allow children to check out books, good videos or even the school rabbit. It is thrilling for the child.

Another school may have a special school Teddy Bear, with a lunchbox and bedding, that can sleep overnight in a youngster's home. The toy comes with a notebook in which the parent can record how Teddy spent his home visit. Teachers read these stories at circle time.

Show and tell is here to stay, bringing home to school and school to home, and parents to work a little later, once a week.

THE WARRIORS ON THE PRESCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Does your little son, to your chagrin, roam the preschool playground with a sand shovel, or paper tube like it's an automatic weapon, often smacking heads and grabbing toys at will?

Adults should remember two things: children may be aggressive because they imagine being unsafe, and children can be taught to care about the results of what they do.

The best of families are often startled to find their sweet child turning into a little warrior around other children in the sandbox. It's not just the Power Rangers that effect some of the little boys and once in a while a little girl, it's nature as well.

Scientists say mankind took a long long time to evolve and civilization is as short as an eye blink, compared to the time it took males to evolve smacks to keep a saber tooth tiger away from the cave and grabs for getting a rabbit for the group's food.

But good parents and teachers have been hanging in there bringing civilized behavior to primitive preschoolers for a long time too.

Adults should remember two things: children may be aggressive because they imagine being unsafe, and children can be taught to care about the results of what they do.

The two and a half year old that rushes to a new child in a group, to give a big push,

may very well be wanting to eliminate competition for teacher's or mother's affection. After stopping the bopping, it's always a good idea to put into words, your concern for the child who wants to protect his clan or his own welfare. "You may feel teacher can't care for you and our new girl at the same time, but I can do that."

Mother's can say to a new big brother, "You may feel Mommy can't care for you and the new baby too, but I can."

When adults see the child's behavior as coming from a basic worry, they can be more effective with what they do and say. They can empathize with the child's sense of courage in attacking imagined enemies and give reassurance as well as those firm limits the child needs to get civilized.

Stopping a child from hurting another may take care of a situation for the moment, but for lasting value, adults have to point out the results of aggression. That's why teachers may say, "Look at his face, that hurts him." In every preschool, teachers sing "When you're happy (sad, mad) and you know it, your face will surely show it." Adults who get children to focus on other people's emotional states, will help children who naturally seem to have a hard time with impulse control.

A collection of magazine pictures of different expressions may help, as does making different expressions in the mirror with a child. These things help bring control to the inner caveman.

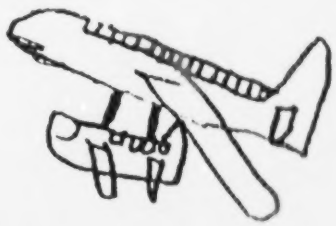
It would be good if children learned these things as fast as they learn to work the VCR or unlatch cabinets you want kept closed. But it takes time. Over and over adults must stop the stomping of someone else's sandcastle or point out a bite feels like a bee sting. It hurts.

It won't take eons of time. Hang in there.

SPACE SCIENTISTS IN THE PRESCHOOL

As he rode through space to walk on the moon, Colonel Alan Sheppard reported that he was not afraid. Neither is the four year old on top of the jungle gym who wants to jump into the sand below. The teacher may not allow it, but the child will dare it.

Preschool children are doing naturally what people in the space program train to do. Rocket scientists have to be imaginative, space pilots strong, smart and daring. When there is a launch, everyone has to cooperate.



Theoretical physicists, the ones who made space travel possible, are people who play with ideas. They say, "What if....?" They have kept alive what children do. Play is the work of the child, and it is always a forerunner of the work that will be done in adulthood.

It's typical of four year olds to start thinking of interesting ideas too. What if we take the playdough from the clay table and stuffed some in the little teapot, filling it to the funnel? The teacher may be aghast at clean up time, or give the child a spoon and a chop stick to get the mess out, but it was an action that came from playing with a new idea.

Solving hard problems, is a scientist's work. Children can be motivated to solve problems as well.

When Sheppard stepped on the moon he said, "It's been a long journey, but we got here." He said "we" because he felt everyone was responsible for the success of the space program, he was just one of a team. There were those who imagined space travel in the first place, those who designed the rockets, those who trained the astronauts and those who sat in the control tower, as mankind explored space for the first time.

Preschoolers work together too. When their cooperation breaks down and arguments start the teacher notices and steps in, so adults often have the idea that children fight a lot, but once young children begin to pretend things in their play, they cooperate endlessly with each other. They may attach all the wagons and tricycles together to make a fire truck. The big wooden outdoor blocks may be stacked to create a hideout. A big blanket over the climbing apparatus turns it into a space ship.

Solving hard problems, is a scientist's work. Out of the space program came Teflon and stick on note paper. Children can be motivated to solve problems as well.

A father, resting on a lounge chair on a Sunday, might want some peace and quiet, so he puts pennies all over his chest. He tells his two children, "You can have all the pennies you want, if you can get them off of me without touching me." After conferring for a while, one child starts chewing some gum to pull them off, the other tickles her dad under the arms. Soon they are off to the ice cream man.

The next time your child seems to be spaced out and not paying attention, think of him or her as a space scientist, maybe the dreaming is prerequisite to building a different kind of space station someday. Maybe that leap off the play ground, will be a another leap into space.

It takes strength, courage, imagination, dreaming and team work to be like a Colonel Sheppard.

GETTING CHEWED UP IN CHILD CARE

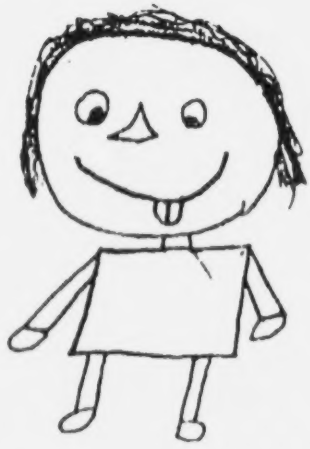
Nothing makes parents angrier than seeing a ring of teeth marks on the little child they retrieve from child care at the end of the day. A Warm Line for parents, offered from Cedars Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles says that biting in preschool is on the increase. They say lots of little children are angry these days, and they are too young to have the words to say what's hurting them, so they bite--probably your innocent child.

Nothing frustrates the preschool teacher more. Even if he or she could fly through the air and across the yard in time to stop some little choppers from chomping, there will be times when a wailing noise makes it clear, the biter has struck again.

The child who is hurting inside is announcing some pain in a dramatic way when there is biting.

Bites are very painful. Ask any teacher or parent. The wound should be washed with soap and have ice applied right away. It's best to use your strong feelings to comfort the victim, as the little biter may very well be getting just what he or she needed --attention. Don't let the child realize he or she found a good way to get it.

Control your indignation and ask all the wide eyed children who are watching to give a hug to the crying child and reassure all of them, especially the biter, you don't want anyone to be hurt. Make a mental note to catch the biter doing something right and praise him or her soundly. It goes against the grain, most of us want to get really harsh and parents often want the teachers to do worse, or expel the child, or bite him back. The wise teacher and parent should know better when young children are concerned. If we can't control our feelings, are we fair to expect two year olds to control theirs?



If older children--three, four or five are biting, a counselor should be consulted. The child who is hurting inside is announcing some pain in a dramatic way when there is biting. When adults suppress biting without helping the child get out the true rage that may be under it, a child usually does something else to get your attention. It is often scratching, spitting or hitting. Get the message now, not when the child is a teenager and can think of worse ways to hurt.

THE BAD LANGUAGE OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN USE IN CHILD CARE CENTERS

"Teacher, he called me a bad name!" says the whining 3 year old in child care. "He called me stupid."

"Tell him your name is Janie, not stupid," says the teacher, inwardly satisfied that Janie has not learned the "F" word__ just yet.

Where do children learn these words that teachers don't use? I have been running a child care center for ten years now and find that hearing a preschool child use swear words upsets parents even more than a child getting hurt and much more than I think it should, says a director.

After all modern day speech is peppered with the earthy words that Chaucer and Shakespeare once used to make points and puns in literature.

Swear words release tension for lots of adults too. Some parents don't notice what their habits of speech are until their innocent two year old says something that sounds like she's been on a construction crew rather than in nursery school.

Early childhood experts recommend not noticing swear words as much as possible.

Parents who are taking care to teach values to their children are often horrified by swear words. Those that don't demean the genital organs of males and females, refer to sexual intercourse. Those that don't refer to body wastes, are sacrilegious, poke fun of gender identity, or are prejudicial towards racial groups.

Worse yet, if parents tell children not to use "bad words," children discover they have something stronger than crying to express how mad they can get. The swearing often gets worse.

Many child care teachers are not supportive of parent's needs to squelch the swearing. They know that children are learning a whole language before they are five years old and telling them some words are "bad" is confusing. Are the words dummy, stupid and nuts bad? Some children get the idea that they are.

Preschool teachers spend their days teaching children not to hit, bite, grab or push. They say, "Tell him you don't like that!" If a child calls another one a name to hurt the child's feelings, they are likely to step in and see that children are referred to by their own names. It's their job to protect bodies and feelings, but a teacher who is going to monitor swear words used to express, power, anger or frustration may find herself doing nothing else. Then there's not time to notice the pill bugs Johnny found under a rock, or look at the shapes clouds are mak-

ing, or sing songs while pushing someone on a swing, when there are those words to chase down. "Teeea-cher. He called me a bad name!" Can take 90% of teacher/child interaction time.

Early childhood experts recommend not noticing swear words as much as possible. Their stress is on guiding children to use more language, not less. Using words is a higher level of functioning than hurting someone physically. They recommend that around six years of age children are told what swear words mean. A six year old can understand that some words should not be heard around parents, teachers and other adults. These are the people who need to be helping children be explicit about feelings. They have used the words frustrated, furious, exasperated, unfair, mean, unreasonable, to model that feelings can be expressed without shocking anyone. Some families will tell older children, we swear at home, but not at school. Some will say you swear at school, not at home.

Explaining what swear words mean, has to come gradually, just like the teaching of values.

There's a saying in early childhood centers, "tell children more what they should do than what they shouldn't do. So feeding young children expressive words rather than censoring the offensive ones can work:

When Janie knocks down a sand castle it's bad form. It's stupendous, when Robert gets his shovel back from Stuart who wants an outrageous amount of things for himself one day. The use of words hasn't changed much since Shakespeare's day, but the skill of teaching children has.

Carabunga! Supercalifragilisticexpealidocious!

THE TRULY LIBERATED COURAGEOUS MOTHER'S THANKSGIVING

Today's moms many step off of a space shuttle, run for public office, or serve in the army, but do any of them have the courage to change Thanksgiving dinner traditions?

Going out of town on turkey day doesn't count. Neither does making a reservation at a restaurant. Real courage means doing something sensible like getting family members to go potluck. That means you don't get raves for doing all those things that need to be done from sunup to sit down. No one can admire that you pulled off a cranberry jello mold, fluffy mashed potatoes and great

gravy because everyone shares in the praise for bringing their best efforts to the table. They also have shared in the work.

Pot lucks bring out the best efforts in everyone's kitchen. They are full of good surprises and there's always too much. Besides that, guests have to take away their own serving dishes.

Doing Thanksgiving dinner alone because the family expects it of you or it's your turn brings out your pioneer spirit but makes your feet hurt. It's never been right that a dinner that takes so long for one person to make takes 15 minutes to eat and three hours to clean up afterwards. Women should know better than to do it all alone anymore.

Women owe it to their children to leave them with happy memories of mom enjoying herself on holidays.

This Thanksgiving, take courage and tell every relative within driving distance that they are invited once again, to sit at your beautifully set table and to bring something to put on it.

Potluck Thanksgivings are a wonderful idea--unless of course, there's a man around that wants to show that he can do something besides carve.

LICE AREN'T NICE

It's awful but it's true. Preschool children in the best of families, the cleanest of families, the most healthful of families — get head lice.

About once a year, parents of children under six years of age may find themselves helping the $90 million a year lice treatment industry. It's best not to get mad at anyone or ask who got it first. Anywhere that little children put their heads together, they are apt to get infested. Parents should act fast and understand this age old pest.

Lice are about the size of a sesame seed, but they are hard to see. You do see their eggs, or nits. They are little white specks that cling to a hair if you try to pull it off between your fingernails.

These nits remain, even after shampooing with a lice remover shampoo. So "nit picking" is a must. Using the little fine toothed comb that comes with a bottle of shampoo, is one way to work on the problem. All parents have to start grooming an infected child, like a mother chimp. It's a good idea to tell preschool children that you are going to play monkey for a few days. Be relaxed and be persistent, because using too much of some treatment shampoo can be harmful.

In the States of California and Oregon, state health officials say that lice have become resistant to lindane which is found in some shampoos. Whatever you use

Consult a pediatrician about what you will do.

must be used according to directions, kept capped and stored well. It is poisonous. The food and drug administration is going to issue a judgement on whether or not lindane is safe to use. Meanwhile, there are plant based products like Rid and Nix. If your child has allergies, these might cause a reaction. Consult a pediatrician about what you will do.

After shampooing, there is no getting around grooming to remove those eggs. They tend to be at the nap of the neck and behind the ears. That's where the preschool teachers look when they inspect children in the mornings. Both parents and teachers must wash and dry all the things children use around their heads.

The next time you see your child scratching his head, don't assume he or she is just thinking about something. Phone your doctor. Get ready to start grooming.

THE 4 C'S THAT COME BEFORE THE 3 R'S

Everyone's heard of the 3 R's and most parents are eager to see children learn reading, writing and arithmetic, but before these can be learned, child development experts say, there are the 4 C's: Coordination, competence, cooperation and confidence.

The brightest child in the world is not going to get anything out of school if a call to group time, seems optional.

Coordination is more than learning to hang on to your own eraser in school, and not to get pushed out of the line to the drinking fountain.

It takes coordination to hold a pencil for writing. Children learn coordination when they have lots of preschool time to climb, jump, run and ride tricycles. If they can work puzzles, cut with scissors, and put on some goggles and hammer a nail in a block of wood, that helps too. Learning to do things makes children feel competent.

It takes a feeling of competence to stick to the printed page of the first reader, when most of those words look like so many ants gone wild. Most children

have to see a word at least 35 times before they learn it. Having had experiences at home and school that builds up competence a child will stick to tasks that seem hard at first.

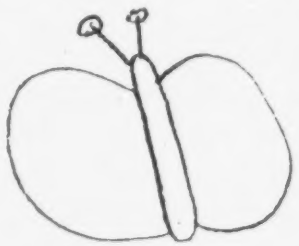
Ask any teacher why cooperation is prerequisite to learning. The brightest child in the world is not going to get anything out of school if a call to group time, seems optional. Lots of cooperative children in schools have to wait while a teacher does a car chase around the room after a child who finds cooperation distasteful.

Wise parents ask preschools if their child is learning to help put away toys at clean up time, to come to nap time when called and to enjoy being with the story circle. Trying to teach children colors, numbers and the alphabet are useless if you don't have a child's attention.

Children feel confident when they know they can button their clothes, put their things in their cubbies and listen when teachers talk. When the 4 C's are being learned, the 3 R's just happen.

BUGGED

Most people squirm when they come upon insects. After all, flies breed in filth and mosquitos and microscopic worms cause disease. It's natural to want to stomp, swat or spray when some bug is discovered. But early childhood educators seem to be able to maintain their cool these days. They think taking an interest in the insect world makes more sense than reaching for the Raid. After all, a trail of ants is really more annoying than harmful. Black ants don't carry disease, they just show you that you haven't cleaned up as well as you might. Preschool teachers, though they will take water and soap to the lunchbox cubbies to interrupt the ant invasion inside, also take magnifying glasses to the ant march outside.



In the out-of-doors, teachers can get children to think twice about their attitudes concerning living things.

"Why are there ants?" they might ask. "Where is the little guy taking that big crumb?" Getting children to think about things and study them closely, is a preparation for scientific thinking.

Children don't have to learn that ant tunnels stir up the ground so that seeds can emerge. Just thinking twice about whether to be afraid or to be curious is enough.

Most children have learned that ladybugs are fun. Mothers have said the nurs-

Getting children to think about things and study them closely, is a preparation for scientific thinking.

ery rhyme "Ladybug, ladybug fly away home...."

Teachers may or may not tell children that bugs don't have wings, but beatles do, so the six legged creature is really a beetle, and it's red color warns birds and spiders that it tastes awful. Lucky for dad's roses. Ladybeetles eat the aphids that suck the plants, that the ants would rather they leave there, because ants milk the green insects like cows.

But what about coming upon a spider? Aren't they dangerous? Not all the thousands of them that there are. Black widows should be shown to children, so they won't put their hands in dark places where these shy spiders live, but without spiders and those webs that are fun to spray with a water bottle, to see the patterns, we would all be batting mosquitoes and flies endlessly. We might even be overrun with waterbugs. They are a flat and shiny black cockroach that emigrated from the orient and is here to stay. Even though it doesn't carry disease, it can be a source of allergies. Mix some boric acid and flour for them to eat and they disappear. Teachers who are enthusiastic about teaching science, preschool style, will catch a few to put under a child's bug viewer for examination.

What preschool workers are doing with this insect interest is teaching children more than science, they are examining biases. Do you love a butterfly but hate a worm? Why is that? Are you afraid of a big shiny potato bug but think pill bugs and sow bugs are cute? They are all as interesting as dinosaurs if you get them magnified enough.

Handling fears and reexamining prejudices are two of the offshoots of the early childhood educators bug explorations. They may save a weevil they found for looking at, or put it back where it is useful, or even feed it to a big green praying mantis that will crunch it up in no time, but they are not likely to be spraying poisons, just eradicating prejudices and developing thinking skills. Peace on earth has big and little meanings in good child care centers.

PRESCHOOLERS AND PETS

Have you ever looked in horror at the face of your sweet smiling little child because he or she was squeezing a baby hamster as though it was a lemon? No matter how kind and patient you are with your little one, you may sooner or later find your child treating a pet rabbit as if he is judging the ripeness of a melon.

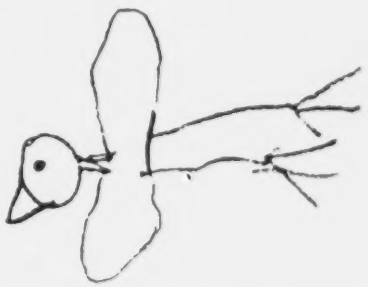
Rest assured that your child is not going to turn into a monster and if you move fast enough, the animal will live.

Child care experts tell us that preschool children are at a stage of development where they need to explore a material to understand it. That's why they paint their hands and not the paper on the easel so often. Poking, pushing, punching and yanking at things is what helps young children learn about the world around them. In time, they too will want to hear about Black Beauty. Your constant and gentle reminder to "pet nicely...not in puppy's eye!" will pay off because you care, and before five years of age your child will undoubtedly develop a conscience.

Around eight years of age, children can help take responsibility for animals.

Some parents want to teach preschoolers to do the right thing by having an animal for a pet and they are willing to do the supervision it takes to keep the animal alive, but it's good to remember that if there are too many no no's associated with the experience of the animal, the child is not learning what hands-on learning teaches. You may find a preschooler who wants nothing to do with that wiggly thing mommy and daddy are so fussy about, or you may find she waits until you are not looking to wring the thing like a wet dish rag.

Around eight years of age, children can help take responsibility for animals. They know about Lion King and have empathy for living things. They've squeezed enough school pets to get a feel for them, and have a growing sense of responsibility for others.



If you want the experience of animal care to be a good one, it's best to be firm about having the child do the animal chores of feeding, but always give the child two days off each week. After all, that's what most workers want. Besides you need to get fond of the pet as well, because if it lives, (unlike some of those school pets) it may be with you when your child goes off to college. Then you'll either be very fond of it or have to control your own squeezing.

MEN IN CHILD CARE

If a man enjoys little children, it's a real test of his devotion to come to a preschool for an extended visit.

Boys and Girls on a play yard with a man are apt to swarm over him like ants on a piece of cake. They can't get enough of him. Why is that? Perhaps children

are cared for mainly by women, and the presence of a male is exciting. The majority of single families are headed by a woman, and many of the children in these families will not know a father while growing up. In today's economy, both parents in a family tend to work and it would be hard to argue that men are away from their children more than women.

In any event, a man who likes to be with children is apt to be very popular and it would be good for young children to have as many males teachers as female teachers. Yet many child care centers will not hire a male teacher and those who want to, can't find any to hire.

In the early childhood classes required for those who want to qualify to teach in preschools, there are few males. There may be some public suspicion that males are not trustworthy around little children, even though none of the charges of child molestation in the Mc Martin case were substantiated, some people still fear seeing men in child care. In California, one can phone 1-900-463 0400 and learn if someone has ever been arrested for child molestation.

Once male teachers are experienced and skilled, they are often more effective in getting compliance from children. Men seem to make less restrictions for children, but enfore the ones they do have effectively.

What every male teacher has to learn fast is to control the swarming. Though he may not mind get jumped on from behind, having his legs grabbed and his arms hung on, children get more and more excited by such a teacher. A new child care worker can feel at a loss to stop the frenzy when it gets tiring. Many men just leave and let the women try and settle down the overly excited children. Others get harsh. A well informed male teacher requires children to respect his boundaries, but enjoys supervising children's rough and tumble activities.

Usually children who come to a child care center with a father, are less stressed about separation from the parent than when a mother brings them.

It's not unusual for a father to have been the primary care giver before a child enters a child care center these days. Some families have work schedules that make it more practical for the father to be with the child. Some fathers have custody of the child. Some fathers are out of work and the mother works instead.

Some fathers who are caregivers have so many less restrictions than a women might, that he has trouble setting the limits children need.

Many American fathers these days have witnessed their child's birth. Whereas bonds between fathers and children may be stronger, marriage bonds are not necessarily enhanced by this. Many children have more than one home due to parents divorcing. If children are young and the patterns of visitation are consistent, they adjust in time.

One of the most frightening things for young children is having fathers and mothers who are angry or with each other. It shakes their sense of security as much as an earthquake. Married or divorcing couples do well to seek mediation or psychological and financial counseling. Maintaining a good working relationship allows children to enjoy both fathers and mothers without feeling disloyal to either.

For the well being of young children, they need to get their share of fathers and male teachers.

SAND AND THE PSYCHE

When children don't behave well, they are often getting sick. But what if a child is well, but seems sick at heart, crying at every obstacle, unable to play in a care-free way at home or at school?

Punishing a child with time outs and reprimands eats away at his or her self-esteem and only makes things worse.

Sensitive parents and teachers can find ways to let the child show what burdens might be in his or her heart so to speak. Such children need a place to release something that often parents and teachers can't do anything about.

Some schools have a place away from the classroom bustle, where a child can play alone in a small inside sand tray that is about the size of the easel paper used for large paintings. Such a sand tray is raised off of the floor to waist height and stands by shelves of miniature toys, figures and objects of every conceivable variety.

The child is able to select these small objects and "make a picture" with them in the sand.

Toys such as lions, soldiers, baby cribs, ambulances, chairs, trees, and even dinosaurs, allow the child to present ideas that he or she might not have the skill to represent with drawings, paintings or talking.

Wet sand is often satisfying, as well as letting the child play uninterrupted and not needing to clean up afterwards. With this activity, the child's behavior often improves, especially when the adults around the child respect this experience as the child's way of identifying and dealing with what is disturbing inside.

Children who are not out of sorts, love playing in the sand tray as well.

Adults both at school and at home should be able to remain quiet and accepting about whatever any child does in this sand play. Sometimes a child will scoop almost all the toys off the shelves and into the sand, so someone devoted to the healing effect of this process must put all the miniatures back after the child is finished.

Child therapists sometimes use the sand tray to get at a child's problems, but

A young child must operate with such an immature brain, almost anything can be wounding.

they have degrees that allow them to interpret or intervene. Teachers do not and should not.

Offered at home or school, the activity is provided just as an art experience is provided.

It is a loving way to help a child heal from "the slings and arrows of fortune" as Shakespeare said.

A young child must operate with such an immature brain, almost anything can be wounding.

A parent may have innocently allowed a child to watch Batman, or read a story like Hansel and Gretel and caused a child to worry about being abandoned. A good friend at the child care center may be interested in playing with someone else for the week. A parent may have rushed a child to school too fast, or a teacher may have reprimanded too strongly. These innocent incidents hurt the child in ways adults can no longer imagine.

The indoor sand tray can be a good way help the inner aches of childhood.

SAFE AND NOT SORRY

When the Olympic games take place, lots of parents will marvel at the skill and courage they see on ice and snow while sitting in front of the television.

At child care centers little children do their own Olympic try outs everyday. Watch three children decide to go down the slide together like a luge team, or someone teeter on the jungle gym, ready to go off like it's a cornice on a ski slope.

Parents and teachers react to these athletic practices with mixed emotions. No one wants to make children afraid of using their bodies, but how safe are children, left on play yards for free play?

Teachers with good early childhood education tend to be afraid of more than the occasional reckless child who seems to be fearless and without judgement. Such a child needs to be watched and guided carefully. "You hang on so well. What a safe child you are," says the wise teacher. She wants him or her to grow up for Olympic competition one day, without broken bones.

What good teachers fear most, is environments that become sterile, due to fear of injury.

What good teachers fear most, is environments that become sterile, due to fear of injury. After all, everything is potentially dangerous. Sand can get thrown in someone's eyes. Children can slip on water spilled on cement. A swing can knock someone down. Stairs can get tripped on.

Good physical environments for children require things for climbing and reaching, balls for throwing, buckets of water for carrying, and places to run to. Children naturally want to learn to balance on the edge of the sandbox like a gymnast. They want to find new ways to climb up the slide, just as a skater develops new routines. They like to gather momentum on a tricycle like an ice racer. Their bodies won't have the coordination of an athlete until puberty, but they are practicing skills by taking risks and not being afraid to try.

Teachers have to keep their eyes open but their attitudes supportive. Some children who hear a great deal of fearful cautions from adults, stand in danger of not trying physical feats to develop the very skills they need to make themselves safe. We all have to be able to jump aside, climb over things, hang on and reach in life. Often children take the fearful restrictions of adults as a challenge. They want to impress the awestruck adult with how easy things really are. They stand in danger of proving a point and missing their footing.

It's best for adults who watch children, not to suck in their breath too loudly and not praise too highly. Children need to test their skills by paying more attention to what they are doing and not pleasing or avoiding adults.

Even little toddlers, need to fall from a step without too much fanfare. They must find out what is safe, with fairly harmless risks. Mothers who pick children up and put them up the toddler slide, keep children from experiencing how to get up and down.

A parent who is a good teacher says, "You got up. You can get down. Put your foot here. Do you feel the stair?"

Of course some children are born jumping and bouncing and love all the space they can get. A cold day gets them running to warm up their engines. They will do beautiful things in a sport one day. Others are satisfied with swinging and watching. The pleasure of athletic competition starts early and is available for all one way or another.

WHEN A TEACHER LEAVES

It takes a while for children to extend trust to their teachers in preschool, so if a child is pretty content in child care it's hard to learn a teacher is leaving.

It's important not to have your child think the teacher left because your child misbehaved, so find out a real reason the teacher is going and tell your child.

Most child care centers and schools for older children have a core of steady teachers and old timers that give the school some stability, but all of them have a percentage of teachers coming and going. That's something to remember, when you help your child adjust to the loss of a teacher, no matter what age your child is.

Every stressful event in a child's life, can be a chance for him or her to learn to cope, so try not to get mad at the inconvenience. Children should pick up on a positive attitude from you. After all, endings are beginnings. The new teacher can be wonderful...in time.

It's important not have your child think the teacher left because your child misbehaved, so find out a real reason the teacher is going and tell your child. He or she had to move, go back to school, or whatever. Don't give your child care center a hard time if they don't deserve it. There is a big turnover in child care centers because wages are low. Can you afford to pay more for child care?

If the teacher who is leaving is a kind person, he or she would probably write to your child, if you had a stamped self addressed envelope available. If you show some consideration for the new teacher, saying hello and welcoming her, your child is apt to be less leery of the new person. Some schools have teachers do a visit to the home, if a child is especially reluctant to accept a newcomer.

Your child will adjust in time, even though for a while, you may have had to stay at school longer when saying goodbye. After a while, don't forget to men-

tion the old teacher on occassion. Say something like, "We remember her and she remembers you. I know she still loves you." Our relationships with teachers affects us the rest of our lives, so parents need to monitor the comings and goings of teachers in their child's preschool.

THE RIGHT WAY TO WRITING AND READING

Does learning to type on a computer make more sense than taking time to learn writing these days?. After all, if you don't know your way on a keyboard, how can you survive in the new millenium?

The time that great grandparents spent learning beautiful handwriting as children is gone. Maybe the illegible writing a lot of adults do these days won't be needed in the future either, but what would childhood be like if children didn't learn to write?

The scribbles that two year olds do, and the tadpole like people that three year olds draw, are all steps to writing, say the preschool teachers.

Having lots of paper and marking pens, pencils and crayons to practice, means children will eventually start making up letters. They pretend to write. Then they make actual letters and say "What does that say?"

"Mirumps" you may have to answer. It doesn't matter. All children get really thrilled with the idea of making marks on paper that say things.

Computer writing is fun too. But if the printer isn't working and there is only room for one person at the screen anyway, it's not the same as being in a group of children who are intent on making marks on paper and maybe coming up with their own names.

Writing and reading come together naturally. Children in preschools learn to read their own names on the cubbies that hold their lunch boxes. If a teacher holds up cards with the names of the other children in class, they can often read those also. What child cannot read McDonalds, or Cheerios? It comes naturally and enjoyably.

Parents who still want to be involved in seeing children learn to read and write have to do some important things. Having lots of paper and pencils is the easy part. Much harder is limiting the television watching and increasing the bedtime reading of library books.

A story read by a parent each evening makes for a future reader, but if you tell a child to turn off the tv where there's a sword fight going on, to hear a story about

Thomas The Train, there can be real trouble.

Schedules help. If there is a consistent television time and a consistent story time, both events can help with reading and writing. Ask a child to tell about the program they just watched. Write down what the child says and read it back to him or her. That's teaching reading and writing.

All children who hang around computers are going to learn to use them these days, but they also need to learn to read words like enter, delete, exit and off--and they need to to enjoy sitting by a parent to hear stories read to them.

EASIER WAYS WITH KIDS EVERYWHERE

SHOPPING WITH CHILDREN IN MALLS AND MARKETS

Timing is everything. Always go to a mall with children who are in strollers, before lunch. When they get bored you can buy something to eat and with some luck, they will sleep while you shop.

Always go to the market, with children who have already eaten.

Get into the habit of including children in your shopping plans early on. Tell them what you will be buying. And tell them what's in it for them: "You can choose a cereal, a fruit and the color of the napkins. And you can choose a muffin to eat when we get home."

If parents are firm about not yielding to demands for this and that it will pay off when children are older. Expect some wailing and whining from the little ones. Passerbys can be impressed if you feedback the child's wants and your policy, calmly. "Boy, you want those cookies so

It's hard for adults to make good choices shopping, so it has to be hard for children to pass up all the wonderful tempting food and merchandise that they see.

badly it makes you scream. But Mommy (or Daddy) is going to let you choose the cereal and that's that. Yes, you want that."

An unplanned shopping trip, that produces bribes of candy or pennies is preparing a child for an adult who says, "When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping." Teach good economics. Be firm.

As children get older, write your shopping list in large letters and let the child hold it and mark off what you have purchased. Show children checks or credit cards. Ask them to read how much money was spent.

It's hard for adults to make good choices shopping, so it has to be hard for children to pass up all the wonderful tempting foods and merchandize that they see. Planning the trip like an educational experience, makes it productive for you and helps you to tolerate the stress of hearing the demands.

Think straight before you enter the mall or market.

TERRIFIC TWOS WITH TERRIBLE TEMPERS

It happens in the best of families. The adorable toddler starts having horrible fits of anger — usually in the worst of places.

What is a parent to do when a child around two has a tantrum in the middle of the month end sale, or grandma's birthday party?

Here are some facts from folks who have studied early childhood: Give up the idea that you can stop the behavior immediately because you don't like it. After all, how quickly do adults let go of anger?

Understand that temper tantrums are as normal for young children as pointing at things and dumping toys. Temper tantrums indicate the brain is developing!

Children discover they have choices and they may make bad ones or ones that you don't agree with.

It's not wise to give in and it's not wise to get mad. Here are some guidelines:

- Narrate what is happening, like, "You want more ice cream."
- Keep your voice calm as you talk, "You are sooo mad."
- "I'm going to hold you until you stop crying, I can't let you kick."
- Hold the child in a tight hold in spite of the struggling while saying.
- "I've got you. You're ok."

If possible, do these things away from other people because everyone has an opinion about what you should do. Half of them will want you to smack your child, others want you to get the ice cream. You should want your child to realize that when he or she is out of control, you are there in control.

Understand that temper tantrums are as normal for young children as pointing at things and dumping toys.

Even though it has seemed that your child was having his or her own way with obnoxious behavior, your child has been feeling helpless and overwhelmed. The young brain is growing, but it is still primitive.

When the child has calmed down, you can talk about what happened. Maybe say, "That was really tough on you in the store. It's hard when mom or dad say 'no more.'"

When an adult gets just as mad as the child with the temper tantrum, it doesn't change the child's behavior. Given what's happening with the child, the adult is out of control as well.

Adults who keep their wits about them when children have lost them, will help children handle feelings much better as the children grow up.

THE CLINGING CHILD

Are you one of those mothers who walks around like you have a wooden leg because your preschooler is hanging on to it? Lots of mothers (and fathers) know about clinging children.

Once you probably thought that getting the child out of your arms and into toddling was an achievement. You wanted to save your back and to stop feeling like a mother chimp! Now you have to drag your leg with this child attached, who is acting like the floor is crawling with alligators just as you are trying to get to the kitchen to cook dinner.

If you have a clinging child who seems to need you to be very close most of the time - don't get mad. Get clever.

Being separated from you, even though the child had a great day at preschool, can trigger clinging.

Little children are programmed to go into "attachment behaviors" over almost anything. Being separated from you, even though the child had a great day at preschool, can trigger clinging.

Another cause of clinging is the video that you felt was age appropriate that started with advertising designed to hold a child's attention with scary events. That will send the child running for that leg of yours. Even the approach of darkness in winter or a voice that is louder than yours might get a child anxious. Your resistance to the child's clinging will only make it worse.

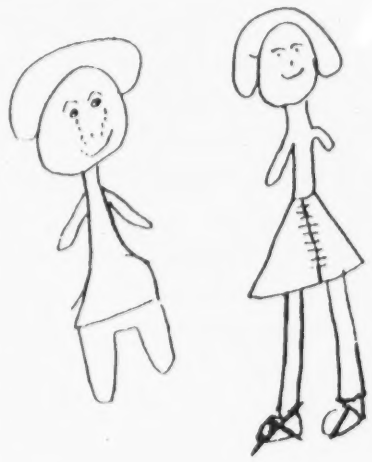
If you become exasperated and brush the child off, then you, the fortress leg of security, seem less attainable. In other words, pulling your child off of you, without explanation, is counter productive.

Try to do things that increase a child's tolerance for your leaving and returning. Monitor the television better and do things that build up a child's acceptance of changes.

On the way to the kitchen, get on the floor yourself and crawl along with him or her. It's no sillier than walking wooden legged, and it's better than getting mad! Say, "Follow me, doggie." Children love to play that they are dogs. When you get to the kitchen,let your child lead as you follow your child somewhere. This may sound crazy, but you are doing three important things.

Getting down at eye level helps the child feel you are more accessible.

When you crawl after your child in play, you act out the child's need to know that you will retrieve him or her if there is danger. If the child crawls after you, it satisfies a need to keep you available. The crawling lightens the mood, making it play rather than grim manipulation.



A variation of this tracking game on all fours, is Hide and Go Seek. Now it may seem like you'll never reach the kitchen where you were about to cook dinner, but these events will pay off eventually.

Tell your child you will play Hide and Go Seek for 5 minutes, and then you are going to make dinner. Get a big blanket and let your child hide from you in the kitchen. While cooking say, "Peek-a-boo !"

What you do with these games is change the mood from angry rejection or submissive yielding to dealing with the problem.

Putting books on a blanket for the child to read, or letting the child attempt to set the table, makes more sense than letting a child watch television. You may trust the program being watched, but commercials can undo all the security you have been trying to instill.

Alerting a child to "what happens next" is also helpful. For instance, when coming home to an empty house, you might say, "When we get home the house will be dark. Let's pretend we are baby owls and we can see in the dark, while I turn the light on." Or, "Soon we will hear daddy's voice," (anticipating whatever deep voice or knock on the door seems to set off anxiety.)

"What does Daddy say when he comes home?" Imitate a man's deeper voice. It's always useful to state the truth and say, "Children your age get afraid of things. Tell me what scares you, so we can talk about it. You can stay with me while I cook, but you must stand on your own two feet."

It is very common for children to have been frightened not only by something they saw on television, but also by something a child told them at the child care center. Be a good listener. Your child may start talking about things and get off that leg. And dinner does get cooked eventually.

GOING BROKE FROM BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Helping to celebrate a baby's first birthday sounds like fun, but with the hole your own baby puts in your budget, you may wonder how you are going to afford all those presents for all those little friends? You may remember how generous your friends were for your baby showers and want to reciprocate, but it's wise to establish a philosophy, and a budget. Remember, everyone may have the same problems you do: the bad surprises of the car repairs that make one uneasy about the good surprise a birthday invitation should bring.

If you are invited to parties, set a precedent for your friends. While no one wants to hear, "Oh, socks...", if fancy socks are what you can afford, Moms watching the opening of presents are usually tactful and helpful, oohing and ahhing as needed. Moms can see that a good book—paperback, yes—will last a long time and cre-

ate memories between parents and children when it is read over and over. Adding a small intriguing toy to the wrapped package makes it fun to open at the party. Help stop the notion that children need presents like $26. name label t-shirts.

For a baby's first birthday, board books with bright colors are wonderful. Babies will start pointing and naming things in the pictures. The hinge quality of turning the pages makes this a valuable toy beyond its price.

Sooner or later moms and dads discover that balls are a favorite toy. A box of balls or one good ball, wrapped in lots of paper you can squeeze into balls right at the party, are fun immediately and in a good price range.

Some experts feel as children get older, parties can have value beyond resupplying the toy chest.

When children turn two or are preschoolers, they need picture books, with very little text to the story. Save fairy tales about real people in bad situations for age seven. If you frighten little ones there's lots of reassuring that needs to be done. If they get numb to scary things, you wonder if they are safe in the world.

Thoughtful gifts are always going to be appreciated. A mom who gives one wooden car to add to the Brio train set, or a grandmother who pre-pays for the Dydee Diaper service for a month may very well expand the thinking about presents, at a birthday party.

Some experts feel as children get older, parties can have value beyond resupplying the toy chest. Announcing that your child will be able to choose the birthday guests, and the number will be one child more than his or her new age, may make you an important leader in your circle of friends. This shows you who is important in your child's life at the present time, as he or she carefully chooses four children for the three year old party.

You may be surprised who your child chooses. Your child can be involved in planning the event and even color a "thank you note" when it is over, as a group so small makes everything more manageable.

But what do you do about the friends whose feelings you "didn't want to hurt" and those you feel you owe an invitation?

Send them a nice card in the mail, or to the child care center:

Janie had a birthday and she turned four

Janie had a birthday and got you stickers from the store

Many moms may learn from your example. After all, many of them have to save for those car repairs as well.

Start with your baby's first birthday. Choose a good economic policy about purchasing presents. It may have an impact on family values in your circle of friends.

GOOD CHILDREN AND BAD MANNERS

Men may have stopped opening car doors for women and even waiters rarely pull out a chair for them anymore, but should parents and teachers go beyond being satisfied with the "Tank-oo" the little children learn around two years of age?

Being considerate of other people gets pretty close to the golden rule and if more people followed that — the evening news wouldn't be so depressing.

Lots of parents feel if they themselves are models of politeness and courtesy, surely the children who love them will follow suite sooner or later. This means they don't insist on five year olds chewing with their mouths closed or learning to offer to pass the potatoes. They don't want anything to interfere with junior enjoying his food.

Asking the eleven year old child to write a thank you note to grandma for the socks she gave him for his birthday would only encourage emotional dishonesty.

It's not until children are grown that some parents notice their own courteous ways didn't rub off. Then it's too late. If they are grandparents they already have to keep their mouths shut about a lot of things.

If good manners are defined as things that show consideration towards others, things fall into place better for today's parents.

Being considerate of other people gets pretty close to the golden rule and if more people followed that--the evening news wouldn't be so depressing.

But how does one teach a child good manners without making them hypocrites and people who are manipulative? Acting like the person in customer service who has to handle loathsome complainers with pleasant tolerance is a good business practice but isn't making the world a better place for anyone to live in.

The answer is to remember good manners reflect consideration for other people. Children as young as two can be shown how to make nice, rather than hit. Fives can be complimented on learning to eat so skillfully that they were fun to have at Aunt Sara's wedding dinner. And 11 year olds can be reminded that grandma tries hard, and they can too, because the older children get, the more they can care for others. That's just the way it is in families where children have good manners to show they are good people.

HOW TO BE A SUPER PARENT AFTER THE WEEK'S SEPARATION

Child care workers love children, or wouldn't care for them. But when it's Friday, they can sigh with relief. It's time to wash the paint out of their clothes and maybe watch the bike path instead of children.

Parents on the other hand love their children, but may sigh with relief when it's Monday. They can watch the road to work and get caught up on things too.

On weekends, working parents turn into Superheros fast. The jobs of laundry, shopping, cleaning, party invitations, making doctor's appointments, scheduling events, reading the mail, seeing people and paying the bills is incredible.

On top of it all, if playing with the baby or little one isn't a priority, the child will make it one.

Even though a baby may wiggle with joy when seeing the child care worker on Monday, or a preschooler may stop fussing and happily start playing in the sandbox at the child care center___no one is as important as parents.

Over a week of separations, the ties between parent and child have been stretched, sometimes very thin.

Over a week of separations, the ties between parent and child have been stretched, sometimes very thin. Babies and preschoolers may react in many ways.

Some can't get enough of mom, wanting to taste and chew on her like a toy. Others want to cling sadly, like baby chimps. Some become more demanding than the stack of tasks waiting for the Superhero of a parent.

What can a parent do? It's easy to get exasperated. It may take the energy that anger provokes to motivate a parent to think things through.

A play time with a baby or child is important. It should not be rushed, but when it's over, it's wise for the parent to get on to the tasks at hand, rather than to feel the child is "owed" something because of the separations from the week.

A good play time with a child means being very present, forgetting everything else and watching the child. Looking in the child's eyes, heals the hurts of the week for both parent and child.

Being clever about turning misbehavior into acceptable behavior at this playtime is a challenge.

Some can wear an old pair of glasses that can be pulled off. Take rambunctious toddlers outside and go around the block. Giving your child unconditional

love and focused attention strengthens the ties again.

Plan to make any testing of your love or the house rules, not be a power struggle, or a chance to manipulate you. (Superheros only have the best of intentions. They do not have to feel guilty.)

Being firm about the need to care for the business of the family or the personal business of the parent, teaches children not to use others and encourages their growing independence.

Preschool teachers often take a child who is acting out of control and make them a pocket pal. The child has to stick close.

If playtime is over and the weekend jobs begin, your child can be your pocket pal, sticking close but no longer getting undivided attention you cannot give.

Watching adults work, especially if the adult narrates what he or she is doing and especially if the adult likes the work, is inspirational for children. This is how they learn they want to grow up.

If parents feel certain they have given a good long time of undivided enjoyable attention to a child, they can speak in a friendly firm way. Perhaps one could say to a whining child: It sounds like you want to cry. "It's ok to cry a little." or, "Say that in your real voice." Attitude is everything. Words said in resentment strain the ties again. When children act like children, it's good for adults to act like adults.

Few people can be stressed if they are singing. When children get demanding and cranky, it's good to sing what's happening to any tune that comes to mind.

No one is ever as tired, or as important as a parent, even though the sandbox calls on Monday.

HABITS-HAPPY AND HORRIBLE

It's 2:00 a.m. and your preschooler lets out a cry. You wait for him to find his pacifier....another cry....then another. If you want to sleep until 6:00 you know you better go and retrieve it for him.

Many parents wonder when their little one will give up those objects that help to pacify a child. Whether a child depends for comfort on a cloth diaper, a teddy, a piece of quilt or something else associated with being held during infancy, the objects are a mixed blessing.

Whether a child depends for comfort on a cloth diaper, a teddy, a piece of quilt or something else associated with being held during infancy, the objects are a mixed blessing.

Transition objects help preschoolers comfort themselves. That's what a you want when it's time to go to work and leave your child in day care, or go to a movie and leave a child with grandma.

But when should a child give up relying on these mystical reminders of mommy's lap and learn to quiet herself without sucking on a pacifier, twirling a wool knob on a baby quilt, fingering a silky binding on a blanket or doing whatever ritual got established to a parent's relief during the first year?

If you ask the Warm Line in Los Angeles, (310) 855-3500 they will tell you that children give up such crutches naturally around seven years of age. If you read some child care books, they will recommend taking away bottles and pacifiers before the end of the first year. There will always be a wide range of feeling among parents as to what is best for a child. Each parent should decide what makes him or her feel satisfied.

A parents who wishes a child would give up a pacifier or blankie on his own, but only nags about it, gives the child a model of weakness. Thinking things through will give a parent the courage of her convictions. One parent may take this tack. When things are going smoothly in a child's life, a parent can talk about the things a child has already done to become independent: learned to walk; learned to use a spoon; learned to brush teeth. "Some day you will not need your blankie to get to sleep" is a note of confidence in the child's ability to grow up.

Another parent may set a date for the end of the period of dependency on the object. Just as birthdays come at a prescribed time, the end of the bottle, pacifier or blanket can come at a prescribed time. It's good to have a celebration of the rite of passage. Party food and a present, as the child mails the pacifier or bottle to someone else, or buries the object in the yard.

If this has been a parent's choice, it requires firmness. If your child wheedles

and whines afterwards, think of the same behavior happening when he or she is in high school and wants to drive your car. Having the courage of your conviction helps you through this.

Of course it's best to support the child in all the self comfort he or she can muster during stressful times like moving, changing preschools, having many illnesses, or having a major change in the family.

Parents who may want to let a child make a decision about when to give up the things of infancy must still help the child in group situations.

It isn't appropriate for a four year old to stand in the midst of a group at preschool and suck on a pacifier.

"Allow it only at naptime or nighttime," some will say. Preschool teachers may urge children new to their facility to bring a transition object, but there is no way they can watch children and precious "blankies" at the same time. They will suggest such items stay in the child's cubby until naptime. Seeing other children in child care cope without objects, helps a child understand that he or she can also grow into independence.

Letting go and hanging on are family matters. You may be able to easily shed pounds after a holiday by giving up sweets. Another mom may need the help of a diet program. Yet another may just let things ride.

If you examine your own feelings about self comfort and self control, you are more apt to come up with a plan that seems right for the child in your family.

Now will you still get up and find that pacifier?

WHY JOHNNY CAN'T GIGGLE

No one puts shoes on a new born baby to help it because it will walk one day. But lots of parents want to teach children to read or at least write their names, before the child gets to kindergarten.

What are the requirements in your school district? Parents shouldn't need to teach reading and writing, teachers should.

What really helps make children good learners in school may come as a sur-

prise. It's social development. By the age of six, children need to be able to get along with other children.

Research shows that when children have friends, are liked, and are not disruptive or aggressive, they do well in school.

Don't stop reading your preschool child those bedtime stories, but do pay attention to how your child reacts to other children. Here are some traits to assess:

- Is your child usually in a positive mood?
  If not, it's a good idea to check out a child's health. Allergies can make one miserable

- Is your child growing away from dependence on adults?
  If you find your child's shoes and lunchbox in his preschool cubby, find out if he or she puts them there, or is it the teacher?

- Does your child usually comes to preschool willingly?
  After three months in a child care center, and if it's not Monday, children should want to go to their programs most of the time.

Inviting a classmate over for a Saturday morning playtime, can give a relationship a boost.

- Does your child enjoy some other children and laugh with them?

Even if it's barnyard words that do it, giggling with other children is a sign of good social adjustment. So is wrestling, if faces are friendly.

If your child's social skills seem troubling, it can help to talk with your child's teacher.

Being a good listener to your child's complaints about things, without giving advice is also important.

Inviting a classmate over for a Saturday morning playtime, can give a relationship a boost. Prepare your child ahead of time with plans for what toys he or she can share, and which ones need to be put away.

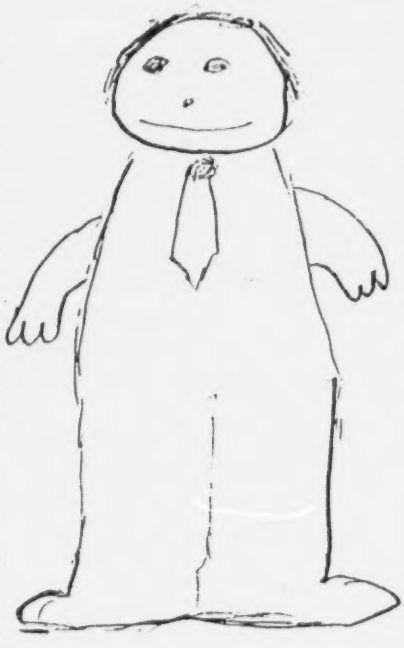
Children are gifted in some areas, and are slow in others. Coaching your child for better social skills may help your child express giftedness in other areas later on.

Reading and writing is the teacher's job, but a kind parent helps a child when being social does not come easily.

DISCIPLINE 101 FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS

Having preschool children would be more fun if they would just act as sweet when they are awake, as they look when they are sleeping. But raising children makes parents learn so much, many may feel they could write a textbook on discipline.

Parents have learned that if you want to leave grandma's house gracefully, you better warn a child first. Children can't be rushed. Even with time to think about a departure, they can kick up a storm of protest.



Parents have learned that the bottom line is, "Can you come by yourself, or shall I take you?" Haranguing falls on deaf ears.

Parents have also learned what is normal, usually at birthday parties, or by talking with other parents.

It's a relief to learn most children won't hurry when it is already too late.

Parents learn that two year olds might bite, many three's will hit, grab and run, and many fours act like hyenas when they are arguing endlessly about who got something first.

Parents start talking "teacher lingo" fast.

"Use your words. Don't hit."

"Tell him you don't like that!"

"Ask for the next turn."

Even when parents know it takes time to learn and the behavior they would like to improve is pretty normal, it can be exasperating.

Even when parents know it takes time to learn and the behavior they would like to improve is pretty normal, it can be exasperating.

Child care experts recommend taking the hard learned disciplining to another level. When one child has injured another, one can say, "Look at his face! There are tears coming out of his eyes. And your face looks so angry."

Then wait. A child who feels she did the wrong thing, will often respond to being asked to help the hurt child.

But a child who feels justified in having

hurt someone else won't budge when an adult says, "Help her get up, let's brush the sand out of her hair. Or, "Sit with him until he stops crying."

When the adult points out that the hitter has an angry face, it usually gets the child to tell what provoked the battle--the child has to talk about it. This is what adults want when they say, "Use your words," so it makes sense to narrate to children how they look.

Sometimes parents may just have children draw straws to see who gets a toy. Or they may ask the children to move away from each other if they aren't having a good time together. Some children recover from grievances readily. Some seem to take hours to stop grumbling about a matter.

When adults remember long term goals, it helps. Just taking a toy away or scolding may be the expedient thing to do, if the family is going to get moving at all. Other times, it's good to remember children can learn to care about how their behavior affects someone else. Saying, "I don't want anyone to hurt you either," shows concern about a person, not just a rule that we don't hit. Looking at what's happening and talking about it helps children get the rules inside, so adults don't have to lay them down so much.

Because it takes a long time for adults to see the results of their patience in teaching, it can get discouraging, but look how precious a child looks asleep and be encouraged.

LIMITS

They say the worst preparation for life is a happy childhood.

That's something to remember when you feel like a monster for stashing your child in the child care center while you work. Sometimes children get upset for things like not getting a turn on the two wheeler at school. They get upset at you for having to go to bed when it's only 10:00 and you have to get up at 5:30. If children have everything they ever want, how will they ever face getting up at 5:30 a.m. when they are grown?

Still, it's often hard to say "no" to children you love when you have been separated from them during the week. Child care professionals want you to learn it. Children who don't get limits on their behavior are less happy than those who can respond to directions from the preschool teacher. If he or she wants the children to come for a circle time story, a child who needs to be wheedled or chased to come usually ends up in tears or anger at the loss of freedom to roam. Good

child care centers give children lots of time to explore the play yard and to play, but they don't want children to miss out on learning to help the group or understand more about the world from the good books a teacher can read to them. Neither do you.

How can parents help children learn to mind more? Lots of parents tell the crawling baby "No" when it's going for the ver or the glass coffee table. Sometimes the more "no's" a baby gets the more persistent he gets. These early experiences with setting limits teach the parent something about managing a child's behavior. It takes time and thought. Instead of "No, don't touch the plant," a clever parent has a new toy in hand. (Maybe an old telephone book to tear up). She goes to the baby and says "Nice, plant," watching that it doesn't go into the mouth. Then she starts tearing up the telephone pages to wrinkle them up. Don't children always want to do what mothers are doing? Distractions are better than "no's" because the parent remains the one who supports the child's explorations and curiosity. She doesn't restrict them. One day the child will explore college classes with enthusiasm.

The attitude of being friendly but firm is the way to go.

But when do the limits start? When walking and talking begin. Toddlers who feel like good explorers can be told to make nice, instead of grabbing toys from others, at the same time the parent sees that there are enough toys for all. But it gets increasingly clear to the growing child that parents like hugging not hurting, hanging on but not hitting. The attitude of being friendly but firm is the way to go. Don't allow what you don't want, but substitute what you do allow. Keep on the good side of your child by keeping your eye on what the child needs. That means the child in child care trusts the teacher to have a story that will be good for him or her and is not running away from a restriction that won't feel worthwhile.

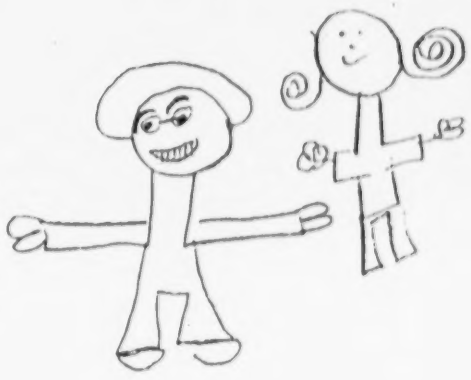
It works lots of times, and when it doesn't, bed time is bed time whether it makes you cry or not. After all, it's preparation for life.

OUT OF DIAPERS AND INTO UNDERWEAR

"Do you help with toilet training?" is a question parents often ask when inquiring about child care. Many child care centers take children in diapers, and yes, they help them with "toilet learning," as it is now referred to.

Centers that use diaper service know that children are more aware of wetting when they are in cloth diapers. When it is noticed that cloth or paper diapers are often dry at changing time and a child is learning more language as well, teach-

ers will suggest to the parent that it's time to get the underwear or the pullups.



It's also time for parents and teachers to help each other. Teachers have seen hundreds of kids make the transition to pants. A parent may be hoping to see it soon, for the first time. It helps to stress some things with the reluctant potty trainee:

- "It's your poo poo." It belongs to you."
- "Lunch boxes go in the cubby, milk in the refrigerator and poo poo and pee in the toilet."
- "Help me pull up your pants."
- "Get me your clean underwear"

Shaming children is out, but getting them to take responsibility is in. Firmness won't make a child who is ready, neurotic.

Teachers need help from parents too. They will be wiping up some spills on the floor and caring for accidents in the new fancy underwear.

Teachers have a hard time changing a child dressed like the great Houdini, who was able to get himself out of a straight jacket after being tied up, and thrown in the water.

Parents love seeing their children dressed in cute clothes, but how can a teacher help change a two year old who has on stiff jeans, complete with snap, zipper, and a belt? It all has to come off for pullups or pants.

A one piece outfit with buttons, whether grandma got it at Macy's or not, takes more time to unbutton and get off over the shoes, than it does to change two children in diapers. And how does one remove suspenders, then pants with elastic around the ankles, when the shoe laces are knotted (and wet), and it's diaper changing time for the whole bunch?

What child care workers long for are simple cotton jersey pants-long in winter, short in summer--lots of them.

When shoes fasten with velcro, there can be more time to read stories because the time spent tying shoe laces is less.

Simple clothes help children learn self help skills.

At least one extra pair of simple tennies or slips ons are important for when the accidents soak socks and shoes as well.

Simple clothes help children learn self help skills. It's best to save the high fashion stuff for weekends--when grandma, or whoever got those cute clothes, might babysit.

SAVE THE WORLD/SPANK A CHILD

No one likes hearing a wailing, whining child in the supermarket. "Why don't they just give that child a good whack?" someone says.

Who among us is not horrified to hear children in a middle school do just about everything in the classroom but learn the subject matter the harassed teacher is trying to present? "What those kids needs is a good paddling," someone mumbles.

Why is it about 40% of the population spanks children and about 99% of the people in the field of psychology warn against it?

It would seem that a fast swat is a simple solution to reprimanding a child. We all want things to be fast and simple, but physical punishments just aren't. Child development experts tell us that little children who are spanked tend to think they paid the price for something they did wrong. What they learn is to not get caught doing what they did, when they do it again. Rules have to be taken to heart, not paid for on the bottom.

Rules have to be taken to heart, not paid for on the bottom.

In some public schools, children can get paddled, but it is never swift. It takes some paper work and conferencing and an appointment with the principle. The offender may forget what he came for by the time he gets there. Chances are good that children who aren't interested in learning are already getting hit at home. Physical punishments often make children so enraged they have it in for all adults in authority. They forget a mistake as though it is homework, they are so upset with their lives.

Disciplining children means having a caring relationship with them. The child who misbehaves and is scolded is temporarily not liked by the adult and this has to matter to the child. Parents teach children what they value when they give them limits. "You can't hit your brother, because it's my job to keep my kids safe. Tell him how you feel!" is better than a smack for a smack.

That whining child in the market probably needs a drink of water, a hug and sympathy for her distress. She may be crying because water won't do it. It was a coke she wanted. A smart parents says, "Let's plan a time when we can have

coke again. What do you think? After dinner? For your birthday party?" Giving in on the coke is almost as bad as swatting her and noisier for the rest of us. Children need limits. Parents who send children to school knowing there are rules everywhere and the people who love you want you to remember them, won't have middle school children who race around the classroom instead of the gym.

If you must hit a child, do it with a wet noodle — the one she got from the box of pasta you got her instead of the coke.

JUST SAY NO, OVER AND OVER

Whether little children spend their summers in schools, camps or at home, adults in charge of them are very likely spending a great deal of their day getting them to mind. It's a good time to remember that very young preschool children learn mostly by repetition rather than explanation.

It takes most young children about 5 seconds to focus on what is being said and if too much language is used they don't understand at all.

It takes most young children about 5 seconds to focus on what is being said and if too much language is used they don't understand at all. The clumsy struggles you see children make with toys and shoes show you how primitive their brains still are. Take a child who is exasperating you by the shoulders, look the little one in the eyes and say "No!" It's ok. The children don't like it. They might even get mad or cry.

If you are cranky about the no too often, some learn it is a way of getting lots of adult attention. These children have to hear no and get ushered into a yes activity besides. They need to be caught doing something right. "Your face looks happy. You are putting the sand in the bucket" (not on someone's hair).

You will enjoy children, rather than find their care a chore, if you feel confident you are introducing them to civilized behaviors. They learn by repetition. "No, pushing her off the trike."

Some adults feel timid about their ability to control children's behavior and are not emphatic enough. It helps to think that if someone three times your size and weight asked you to do something, you would — especially if it was only to go into the next room, or pick up your shoe. Talking with authority helps.

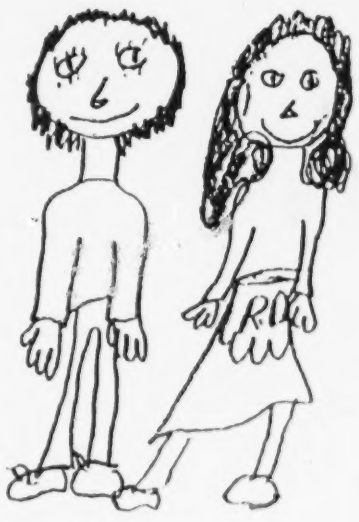
It's not fair to children not to ask them to gain competence, just as it's not fair

to parents, to have a child go to bed at 11:30, leaving no time for parents to be together.

If adults cannot help young children comply with no, they will have a harder time helping a teenager do it.

Too many words and explanations about things make young children anxious. Simple words and directions are best for young children. Around four years of age, a parent or teacher can cut down on words, and simply write in big letters on a pieces of tagboard: "No hitting, " "No breaking things," "No bullying." They may become well worn flash cards.

It's hard being a parent and no one should feel guilty about taking steps to teach children to control their impulses or to know parents have rights. Just say no.



THE HARD PART ABOUT LOVING IN THE FAMILY

What happened to that cubby 4 month old baby you talked nonsense to and who smiled all over. That baby was so lovable, but disappeared into a hurtling toddler who said no to everything but was soon singing Barney's "I yuv oo, oo yuv me," and being endearing in a new way. Let's face it. The children we love keep turning into different children all the time.

Psychologists say all love relationships, even those between parents will change as time goes on.

What's hard about it is that you lose something before you gain something. Psychologists say all love relationships, even those between parents will change as time goes on. One love dies. Another love is born.

How a couple loved before the baby came is different than the love that comes after. Television's Mister Rogers may say that love just grows and grows but it's hard to see it that way when you are wondering were the magic went, whether it's your sixth grader telling you to pretend you don't know him as you cross the play yard together, or a spouse

clutching the channel changer when you want a program that's important to you.

Old love dies, new love emerges--people who hang in there and stay committed get the gist of it by and by.

DO LITTLE CHILDREN HATE PRESCHOOL?

When you must be on time for work and you have to leave your little one bawling and balking at the preschool's gate, you may worry that your child hates preschool, even though teachers say otherwise and it's hard to get him to leave at pick-up time.

Child care workers usually find that children are upset about separating from parents on Mondays, or after extended holidays at home. Transitions are hard on children and they have to get used to things all over again after an absence. Most children recover from their gloom and are back on a familiar tricycle or in the sandbox in no time. Other children can remain morose, sucking thumbs, holding onto blankies, asking endlessly, "When is my mommy going to pick me up?" It's heartbreaking when a little one who has been very quiet all day suddenly bursts into tears sobbing, "I want my mommy." When are children truly adjusted to preschool and like being there?

A child is well adjusted, if his or her first introduction to school was done carefully, with mother staying a while to help with the first hours and days of separation. If this isn't done, children are apt to get used to things, but not really be present in spirit. They are easily made anxious.

Preschools that ask mothers to leave children suddenly are like people who think children should learn to swim by being thrown in the water. Once a child's trust in the mother or father is shaken, they can easily feel uneasy again, even after they are accustomed to going to school daily. If you think your child's entry into child care was pretty brutal, you can help heal the wound of it, at any time.

Take your child in your arms and recall the event. Mention good parts, like "When we first went to preschool together you loved the swings so much."

Mention the hard part. "You were just little and you thought mommy was going to stay with you when you went swinging and when you ate your lunch

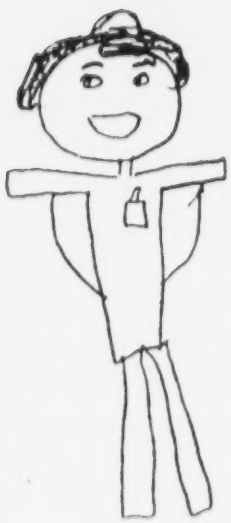
Preschools that ask mothers to leave children suddenly are like people who think children should learn to swim by being thrown in the water.

from your new lunchbox. When I went to work to get us our money for our food and your new socks, you cried and cried."

"You were so glad when mommy came back to get you after work. By and by you learned I would always come back, but that was hard for you. Now you think of me when I am gone and make me nice pictures. I think of you when I do my work."

A big hug is healing. If you stayed home with your child all day, chances are good there would be no other children to play with and your child would soon long for the richness of the preschool with its children, swings, and activities. So don't feel guilty, feel empathy-- with the struggle it was to adjust to being separated from you and to grow up and love preschool.

SOFT HEARTS BUT TIGHT FISTS



Mothers of young children get very good at accomplishing things with a toddler on a hip, using both hands and a chin, to get groceries out of a car or another little child into a child care center. What's much harder to get good at, is teaching children to get along. Parents don't want children to hurt each other and they usually want children to share things far beyond their ability even to do so. Parents have high ideals for the children they are presenting to the world, but a lot is against it.

Most television programs for children promote the solving of any problem with violence. Interactive television games make maiming and killing a hands on simulated experience.

No matter how careful a parent is, or how often the child care centers point out the negative teaching of it, many children watch hurtful solutions to conflicts and they bring this behavior into play situations.

A father says, "A smack on the behind seems to improve hearing." Child care

If hitting works at home, maybe it can work at school too.

workers will find such a child applies the same behavior to getting a turn with a trike. If hitting works at home, maybe it can work at school too.

When parents watch sports events on television they are the right track, showing children there are channels for expressing the human need for competition and winning. It's even better when a parent finds his or her own soft ball, bowling, or basketball league as important recreation time.

Teaching conflict resolution through peaceful means is something early childhood educators have always done.

Preschool teachers say, "Use your words. Tell her how you feel." It's more important than punishing an aggressor because it is guiding a child to negotiate, not depend on an adult, or not to resort to physical means. No child learns it immediately, but good teachers are endlessly patient.

Resorting to "time outs" and "benching" is much like going to jail. There is a lot of recidivism. Children who have to be removed from a group for being aggressive or acting dangerously need some verbal interactions. "What is the rule?" The teacher insists, or "Tell me what you did wrong," or "Tell me what you will do now." Wise teachers know they need to re-establish a child's sense of being a good person, or they will create a renegade who enjoys trying to outsmart the adults in charge. It's not easy when the television has made kicking Power Rangers so very glamorous.

When adults are taught conflict resolutions, they learn the first step is to define the problem, or the issues. The next step is to see the problem is the enemy, not the persons involved. Teachers ask little children," What makes you so angry?" "What shall we do about this?" she says to the whole group. Children may give strange answers sometimes, but they learn they have the power to think and negotiate, rather than send a shovel off like a missile.

Sometimes children are very relieved when a teacher diffuses a situation by saying, "Oh, come on, let's all give each other a hug. It's stressful for children to wonder if they will lose an argument, and the direction to be friendly is a welcome relief. Another tact is to say, "You guys can settle that. You're smart boys." When adults step in too quickly into arguments, children don't get a chance to develop strategies. "You can't come to my birthday party," or "I'm not your friend anymore," may sound harsh, but it is peaceful negotiation. Even name calling, though it's hard for adults to tolerate, is a step above smacking, biting, shoving and grabbing. "I'm glad you are talking about this, if you both want the same shovel, does that mean we need more digging things?" Teachers and parents who can stay focused on the problem can help children best. It's trickier than getting out of the car with two children and the groceries.

ADOPTING NEW ATTITUDES ABOUT ADOPTIONS

"Those two children can't be brother and sister. Are they adopted?" says a passerby to a mom with her two children of different skin tones and coloring. "Yes, my children are adopted and yes they are brother and sister," a modern mother might answer. Think about it.

Keeping adoption a secret from children is no longer recommended, but other concepts are. Adopted children are not "special". Every child is special. Why risk making other children feel badly, or an adopted child feel strange.

Families are formed in many ways, adoptive parents explain these days, right when the questions might arise. "Some moms grow the babies inside them, some can't do that and look for babies who need a home. Some moms go to clinics to get a baby started. A mother is the person who raises the child. Some families are all the same color, some are different colors."

Adoptions work best when parents have made their peace with infertility and decided adoption is not a second best way to form a family, but the way they want to do it.

Honesty is the best policy, but young children need to hear words that don't confuse them. It's best to hear about your "birth parent" rather than "your birth mother." And adoptive parents feel that they are the lucky ones to have found a baby, so there's no need to say, "Oh, you are so kind to adopt that baby." Overseas adoptions are increasing as more couples find they have fertility problems and are devastated by procedures that didn't work, were costly or threatened to wear out the marriage.

All parents like to hear what a nice looking family they have, and it's supportive to say this. Not helpful is saying, you know someone who got pregnant as soon as they adopted. It only happens in a very small percent of people.

Adoptions work best when parents have made their peace with infertility and decided adoption is not a second best way to form a

family, but the way they want to do it.

Happy Adoption Day, by John McCutchen is a good book for preschoolers and sets the ritual of families celebrating not just a child's birthday, but also the day the child arrived and the family was formed. *Adoption, Let's Talk About It!* by Fred Rogers of Mister Roger's Neighborhood is illustrated with heartwarming photos of adoptive families and clearly shows there are many different kinds of people who form families and care about each other.

THE MEANING OF THE MEANNESS OF TWO YEAR OLDS

"It's mine!" yells the two something child who has yanked away a toy clearly in the possession of another little child. He runs to the corner of the play yard and examines his catch. If a mother or a preschool teacher get there to set things straight, they are likely to hear "Go Away!"

If they get there after the culprit has examined the toy to satisfaction, he is likely to fling it away.

Children around two or three progress in their thinking capacities in mysterious and aggravating ways.

Children around two or three progress in their thinking capacities in mysterious and aggravating ways. They seem to realize that they have previously unknown powers of acquisition. Skills that will do well when stealing a ball on the sports field, cause havoc among the preschool crowd. Grabbing and getting things has adults saying. "Hang on!" to squalling butterfingers, and repeating again, "Use your words," to the little Samurai.

Grownups should hang on also. When children do get more words, between three and four, there will be less yanking.

The often heard "Go away!" is equally difficult, especially when Daddy is just returning from a trip and finds his precious child on a lap, hearing a story. Young children can't keep two things in focus at the same time. That's why they may get mad if mom and dad are hugging or if a preschool teacher is holding the hand of a new

child. They can't see the adults able to love them as well as others. They feel their love being drained away by another.

Flinging things away when interest is lost in an item, is equally difficult, especially when the item might be a metal car, or plate of spaghetti. It's hard to see the potential of having a great throwing arm if you are the one who is glad the car sailed over your head, or you have to get on your hands and knees to clean up the pasta.

Don't waste your time explaining to grandma and other bystanders these developmental milestones. Just say "No," quite frequently and firmly, and realize that time takes care of a lot.

When children do start getting more words they can use easily, chances are good you won't like a lot of them. Hang in there, even when you feel like flinging something yourself.

ARE YOU SCARING YOUR LITTLE CHILD?

Good parents know little children have to do at least some of the things you tell them to do.

Often, telling a child, "pick up your toys" gets them dawdling instead. "Don't play with the stereo," can get as common as the "loading and unloading in the white zone only," that you hear repeated at the airport terminal. If only all directions given to little children were followed as pleasantly as the directions you give to a toddler to "find your nose, find your toes."

No wonder so many parents say "Come on, or I'll leave you," because it's bound to work.

When you are out in public and need your child to stick with you and not get lost, it's especially urgent that your child does what you say. No wonder so many parents say "Come on, or I'll leave you," because it's bound to work. It may feel good to know you have this effective control.

A wise parent needs to think twice about this. There are some basic fears common to each stage of a child's development. Fear of being lost from the parent is the biggest for young children. That's why it's so hard to leave them in child care, even though they have a good time there.

The fear that you will lose them makes them move fast. It's really terrifying

to the toddler and young child.

When the child was an infant, its greatest fear was falling and you could see the child "startle" if he or she felt insecure on the dressing table. The arms jerked out and the baby cried.

Fear of abandonment stops children dead in their tracks. Parents who let the threat of leaving become a habit might be tempted to tell children who are not minding, "I'm leaving. I can't take this any more." Words to that effect not only frighten little children, they undermine the trust they have in the world. Threatening to leave a child creates anxiety that contributes to making it hard for the child to learn to be without the parent at schools, to watch scary things on tv, or even to learn. It creates an underlying uneasiness.

You are a good parent when you are afraid of losing your child or afraid you are raising children who are lawless because they don't listen to you. You want to do a good job and young children are often frustrating.

The simple solution is to say just how you feel. If a child is moving too far away from you in the market, say, "I'm so worried I will lose you." or, "Mommy doesn't want you to cry if you can't see me, now stay with me."

Those wild days at home, when things seem out of control, could be handled with "I'm angry! Children in this family are to do what I say;" or, "I'm feeling very very worried right now. If I told you an earthquake was starting, you need to come here, how do I know if you would mind me, when you don't do what I say now? Parents need to have children listen. It's not safe for them not to know that."

Getting your true feelings out is often such a relief that you can then think of better ways of dealing with the problem. You can separate children who are fighting, send them to different places to play, or immediately take away a privilege like a tv show.

This gets attention and lets children know you are powerful; whereas threatening to leave induces fear, even if your children don't show it on their faces.

You know you won't abandon your children, so it's not fair to scare them by pretending you will, when there are other ways to get them to mind.

FEELING GUILTY ABOUT DAY CARE

At work, dad glances at his shoe and sees a little formula caught in a crease. In her office, another mom turns her head and smells a little breast milk spit up on her shoulder. It doesn't take these events to remind parents of the baby they've had to take to day care. It's as evident as the mortgage.

Parents think about their babies a lot, when they are separated from them during the day. Even though many moms report they work much harder at home than at work, most long to be with their babies.

Sometimes this is reflected in a parent saying, "I feel so guilty leaving my baby." It makes child care professionals uneasy.

When children in child care get older, how the parent leaves the child has an effect on the little one's adjustment. Some parents say to a hesitant child, "I wish I didn't have to go to work too," or "I'll pick you up as soon as I can," or offer a bribe, like "we'll go to McDonalds" for dinner. Children get the idea that they are being required to suffer for the day.

Children pick up feelings like a fox picks up the scent of a rabbit. The feelings could be: This place is not safe. My mommy is unhappy. I am not as happy here as I would be at home, so I should be rewarded for staying here.

No parent wants to convey ideas that make a child's adjustment to separations more difficult than they are, so feeling guilty about child care has to be reexamined.

Parents who are able to hold a job in which they invested training or education, have that to be proud of. Add to this achievement, the ability to care for a child, a home, the laundry, shopping, cooking, birthday parties, doctor's visits, bill paying, and personal care. Parents who can do all this should get metals, not guilt complexes.

Having chosen child care carefully, parents should be content that the child is well cared for. Few homes can provide so many playmates, or the variety of toys and activities that well qualified child care providers can.

It is possible to see a child in child care as a privileged child, having capable caring parents who provide the best for the little one. In any event, the child who is left in someone else's care with the attitude that this is a great place and you can have a good time here, has an advantage over the one who is left with messages that increase anxiety.

Play is the work of the child, and work is the work of the parent. If a parent does not like his or her work and doesn't want to go to it, why should a child like his day at the child care center?

Some psychologists define guilt as anger that you think you can't express. We are all angry that the days aren't longer so we can do all the things we want to do. But what a bonus that so much is possible. Count your blessing, not the hours you are separated from your child, and you help your child thrive in child care.

HOLIDAYS AND HOT ISSUES

ART FOR ART'S SAKE AND STAIN REMOVER FOR MOM'S SAKE

It's bad enough when your preschool child comes home with green hands, but when she says we painted the wall outside you may think she's learning to be a tagger while you're at work. Ask questions before your fingers walk the yellow pages for a new child care center. Your child is learning.

The teacher may have had the children paint their hands for a friendship handshake. It was squishy. If it didn't turn into friendly back pats, it let them experience squishy without prejudice. Now how are you going to grow up to take biology lab or reach for the giblets in the holiday turkey if you get faint about squishy?

Painting activities are a preparation for learning because they mean the chance to play with materials as well as to express big ideas that little children can't do with little pencils and little papers yet.

Physicists like Stephen Hawking say playing with ideas leads to discovering scientific theories. Fooling around with materials to understand their properties comes before doing something creative or significant with those materials, whether they are building blocks, number facts or ideas.

Playing with playdough, clay, marking pens and those stainful tempera paints

Studies of children over long periods of time show that those with free play time with many materials, do better in learning in all areas.

is messy business, no matter how many aprons the teacher manages to get on the children.

Studies of children over long periods of time show that those with free play time with many materials, do better in learning in all areas. It's a good argument for alternating the hard academics with the experimental art activities in higher grades and it is the mark of an enlightened child care center.

Chances are good that a wall got painted with water, or a long piece of butcher paper was tacked up, when a child reports painting a wall. Preschool teachers actually take classes to get ideas about these things.

Adults who go well manicured to work and school have usually forgotten how the messy creative urge was knocked out of them around 4th grade when you weren't supposed to draw in the margins of the spelling book. It may take a minute to see the value in art activities when you are seeing a rainbow of stains on good school clothes. Take heart. Your child will not go to college with green hands and some clever scientists have created stain removers that even get out pen, ink and marker stains (Try Motsenbocker's Lift Off).

To rehabilitate your own creative urge, here is a recipe for a material you will like playing with, right along with your child:

MAGIC MUD
5 parts corn starch
3 Parts water

If you don't' mind leaving the house with colored hands, you can drip food coloring into it.

BIG BODIES ARE BIG AND BROWN EYES ARE BROWN

"O.K., you be the nurse," says the preschool girl to the boy playing with her in the dress-up area. "I'll be the doctor." The teacher beams. Early childhood centers have thrown out books and attitudes about sex role stereotyping and want to see all children feel empowered to do what good things they can in the world.

But why do so many older girls and women, look in the mirror and see phys-

. . . centers have thrown out books and attitudes about sex role stereotyping and want to see all children feel empowered. . .

ical faults. "I'm too fat" is the most common. In this age of woman's rights, many women still think only Snow White made it in the looks department. Among the middle aged, there are more women getting face lifts than there are men getting hair plugs.

In the USA, products are sold by models who average as much as 15 pounds less than most females. That can explain how young females have been convinced that skinny is better.

Research tells us that fat children are apt to be treated in cruel manners by other children. How do adults help children learn not to do this?

In the child care center, teachers have to take care to put "boys clothes" in the playhouse area. The jewelry, purses and party dresses moms have donated are so popular on daily basis, you'll never get anyone to be daddy, if there aren't some boots and old men's suits there for the boys.

Something is at little girls to get them to feel attractive. Just try to get a little girl to wear practical jeans to school, if she has it in mind that "girls wear dresses" and dresses make one pretty.

Good teaching for girls and boys means we admire that bodies are especially big when full of a baby. And often some bodies just come big anyway, like some eyes come brown. Anyway, all girls and boys are full of promise, whatever the mirrors say.

WET BEDS

Once children are out of diapers, most parents expect them to keep their beds dry as well. Often it happens, but many times children continue to wake up sopping and mom starts the mopping.

Watch out for how exasperated you get. Chances are good that this is much harder on the child then on you, even though the face does not show it.

Here is a good routine to follow with the child who is slow to stay dry:

• Save your mattress by keeping the protective bedding on the bed. Say, "This is in case you have an accident because you are still learning to stay dry at night."

• During the day, mention toilet control successes casually. "You used to wear diapers, now you wear underwear, you are really learning so much these days!"

• When a child is using the toilet, play a game of controlling the stream of urine. Ask a child on the toilet to stop the stream and then let it go. This is practicing control of the muscles needed to hold the urine in. Point this out.

• After storytime and before the goodnight kiss, go to the potty.

• Before you go to bed at night, get your child up and walk the sleepy one to the toilet again, every night for a while, then work on getting this to be the child's job.

• Be sympathetic to the child if the bed is wet. "Oh, that's hard on you because you do so well using the potty in the day time, but you'll learn, you'll see. Remember when you wore diapers during the day?

• Talk about dreams, say: "Dreams are stories that go through your head when you are sleeping. Did you have a dream that you remember from last night?" Knowing that this happens increases your standing as a smart and caring adult who can talk about something else besides going potty all the time.

Being supportive instead of critical is the best support.

• Even if it's hard, have the child help change the bed by pulling off the wet sheets and taking them to the laundry. Getting competent in this helps the child make up for the slowness of success in night time control.

Why do some children get dry easily and other can't make it, even into grade school? It could be the size of the bladder and the strength of the muscle control that your child inherited. Ask your parent when you finally learned to keep dry at night.

It good to feel certain that a child's wetting does not mean he wants to be cared for again as in babyhood, because things are so tough during the day. Being supportive instead of critical is the best support. If bed wetting persists past five years of age, it's good to ask a pediatrician to assess things. Adults who wet the bed a long time as children, report how humiliating it was for them. If a child could control it easily, he or she would.

RUNNING CHILDREN AND RUNNING NOSES

If babies only came with directions, you would have known that around three years of age they might be getting seven to ten colds a year. Is there any way to beat the odds, other than inheriting a really good immune system?

You may be inclined to blame any group your child has attended for being a hot bed of infection, but pediatricians report that in families that have young children, some family member is sick about 1/5th of the time.

Schools often allow children to come to school with "old colds." A cold is not considered contagious after a few days and if parents stayed home until the nose stopped running, they would lose their jobs or never leave the house all winter. So many children's groups have children with running noses.

Don't blame Johnny's infection on anyone because Johnny didn't wear his jacket one day.

Public health professionals tell us that cold virus' are airborne and it is any crowded condition where children pick up colds. There are thousands of different cold virus. You get immune to one after the other, so that the older you get, the more resistance you have. Airplanes recirculate a lot of the air everyone has been breathing, so it's not uncommon to get a cold after traveling.

Researchers have learned that coldness and wetness don't cause colds, so it's good if children play outside a lot, even if it's chilly. It's less crowded outside.

Some children just don't want coats and move around (getting good exercise) to get warm. Adults have to ask them to wear a coat because it makes them feel cold just to watch these kids. Of course, children who are getting over an illness have to be coddled and kept warmer than others.

American children are a little heavier and weaker than they used to be. Probably from so much sitting, so if your child is coatless and running around outside, it may be better for his health.

Places that care for children should be helping to control the spread of all diseases however, by teaching children to wash their hands a lot. It's hands that transmit bacteria to the mouth or the eyes. Tables, toys, and the handles of things should be wiped off with a solution of one tablespoon of Clorex to one gallon of water regularly. The Clorex evaporates.

If you take your child to the market and he or she hangs onto the handle of the shopping cart, guess what's there? You might keep some wipettes in your purse for cleaning off things that your child touches in public. Teaching your child to wash hands is important, and they usually love it.

Stress lowers the immune system's effectiveness.

Then there's the emotional part to consider. Stress lowers the immune system's effectiveness. Keeping things as calm and pleasant as you can at home, is healthy for kids. So if you've been confined to the house with a sick one, don't go bananas, make some banana bread with your child--if you can get him to stop washing his hands.

DREAMS AND PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

When Christmas comes, do little children, nestled in bed, have visions of sugar plums dancing in their heads or do they see an angry nutcracker, pursuing them right up to the parent's bedroom where they look for comfort. Bad dreams are common to children and parents who learn to talk about them in the morning, may get more sleep at night.

If a dream was really bad, chances are good that a child won't want to talk about it right off. The characters and events that appear in dreams seem very real to young children. Look how real television's Barney seems to them.

Treating a dream like a story can be beneficial and enjoyable.

You can get children to be open about their dreams by telling them that you dream too. Just causally tell a child a small segment of your dream, like "Oh, last night I dreamt my boss at work was on top of the roof telling me to come up." Children want to feel their parents are safe, so dreams that make you feel in danger are not the ones to share. You want children to share dreams that make them feel unsafe, however, so you can help them feel secure.

Treating a dream like a story can be beneficial and enjoyable. If a child says a monster was trying to get him, you can say, "That dream is not finished, let's finish it now. What shall we do with the monster?"

Encourage children to express what they feel they would do to the bad characters, but when they are finished, tell them something like, monsters can be locked up until they behave and this monster needs to say what makes him so

angry. The monster needs to learn to be manageable. Maybe the monster shouldn't get any cookies until he can be safe. The child should keep the key.
One reason for not saying, let's shoot it or kill it is that it encourages this kind of solution for things that frighten people. Pretending that dream characters are cute and funny, like the Cookie Monster on Sesame Street, leaves children feeling it is not ok to have frightening feelings and encourages emotional dishonesty. Fears have to go into the store of the unconscious and come out in behaviors that are anxious and not reasonable or logical.

Then too, the bad characters and events in dreams come from the child's mind. Some psychologists say they represent ideas that a child is not willing to admit to when awake. Like dreaming mommy got caught in the mud, the day after the she scolded a child for something.

When children dream they are in danger, it can be a sign of developing conscience. They are learning that there are rules and if they seem reluctant to mind them while awake, the brain may think they need to be punished severely for not adhering to them. Parents can help children accept that feelings are normal, but behavior is determined by rules of society – have conversations about dreams.

Parents who feel they understand this dream world we all enter into at night and want to give a scientific explanation to children are less helpful even, than those who don't want to talk about the subject at all. None of us wants someone knowing what we don't know ourselves, unless we ask for it. Children will stop sharing these intimate ideas if parents are too invasive. Just listening can be the best. Anyway, experts disagree on what dreaming is all about.

Dreams may be the brain's way of doing what the computer does when it sorts data. We may be just tossing all kinds of information, experiences and images around in our brains, when the waking mind is asleep.

In the Bible, dreams are often prophesies of future events. Astrologers as well think that dreams are thought to be warnings of what might happen. The father of modern psychology, Sigmund Freud taught that dreams are fulfilling wishes we don't know we really have. His contemporary, C.G. Jung thought that dreams are showing us sides of ourselves we don't admit to. A dream is a message from the unconscious to the conscious for some reason or other.

Still, dreams can frighten little children and since we sleep one third of our lives, and everyone dreams, whether we remember the dreams or not, parents who let children know they are aware of the event of dreams, establish themselves as a wise source of help and comfort when bad things replace sugar plums at night.

Children will be more willing to stay in their beds with the dreams, if they can talk about them in the morning.

FOR CRYING OUT LOUD

Responding to a child's cry is a reflex. A nursing mother can even find her milk leaks out, if her baby cries from another room. It's nature's way of seeing that the young are cared for. But what if parents or teachers have done everything they can to care for a preschool child and crying seems to persist beyond reasonable need? Around two years of age, children even start escalating crying into temper tantrums. The feet kick and the tears flow. It's exasperating.

It's also the body's way of releasing tension, say the experts. Frustration builds up in little children who do not have the vocabulary to talk about what is stressing them. If tears that come from distress crying are analyzed, they have a different chemical composition than the tears that normally keep the eyes wet. Crying tears have antitoxins and hormones that are associated with a distressed body. That means crying is really good for children! But how good is it for caring adults to ignore their reflexes and not try to help little children?

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Narrating what is happening, until the child gets those tears out is a good idea. Adults can use the words that children can't get at so quickly, to buy time while the child gains equalibrium. "You want to stay and play with all the toys in the store. There are so many. It's hard to stop and it really makes you mad that I have to pick you up and take you away." is an example.

When parents and teachers get exhausted from the tension they feel from children crying, they do well not to get either angry, or ignore children. Both these reactions give children the message that it's better not to cry or that no one cares if you are upset. The trick is to let children relieve their stress while monitoring it. Narrating will do this.

Sometimes adults really want to cry themselves, They have given lots of care to a child and nothing seems to satisfy. It's no longer socially acceptable for

adults to cry, so they get angry instead. After all, a child having a temper tantrum evokes stress in everyone.

Preschool teachers learn that if a child might harm himself or others, they should hold the child and calmly say, "I've got you. You're ok." Children who are out of control are frightened and need the reassurance that the adults who care for them can manage them and keep them in control until they can do it themselves, in spite of the wiggling and yelling to get free.

Whining seems to be crying that hasn't gotten started yet. If children can't get themselves out of whining by activity (exercise is the best stress reliever for any of us), then you can be sure stress is building up and the tears are coming.

As children get older, crying lessens, and angry words increase. That's one reason to tolerate the garbage talk awhile. It's a higher level of tension release and children usually cry and yell their feelings at the same time.

The overly calm adult who does not react to temper tantrums makes children feel they are crazy. The over-reacting adult who gets exasperated contributes to children growing up to feel that crying is not permissible. Stress then moves to manifesting itself in headaches, jaw clenching, stomach problems and so forth. It looks like most adults would do well to have a good cry every once in a while, maybe in a private place.

Older children sometimes get in the habit of crying when they are distressed and don't make use of other ways of relieving tension such as through play, talking, or joking. Learned crying in the older child can be lessened if adults take care to remind the child that he or she has learned lots of things in the world, like remembering to bring home the lunchbox, keeping the bed dry at night and brushing the teeth. The adults can tell the child they are confident that learning to talk about an annoyance is better than crying so much. We can save crying for bigger things.

If an older child cries much more than any other child in a group and it is obvious that the child is not learning self help skills. One can make a taped recording of the crying. When the adult is not annoyed and the child has calmed down, play this back to the child and ask if that is how they want to sound when they need to talk instead. Challenge the child to let go of the dysfunctional crying by catching them using words to solve a problem, or being assertive without tears. Say, "Your face looks like you mean it!" or something else to empower the child.

Women who have learned from childhood that crying evokes a response in people they care about, soon find in the business world that the behavior is not appropriate anymore. Men who were told early in life, that boys don't cry, probably do their bodies a disservice by never discharging the stress that a good cry brings.

It looks like adults need to "go to their rooms" for a good cry every once in a while, but the little ones need to be out where a parent or teacher can put some words to their stress for them.

DOWNSIZING CHRISTMAS

When winter wonderland comes, so do the colds and the holiday expenses. Parents have to face time off from work and long wish lists at the same time. Is it a big downer if Christmas has to downsize?

Cheer up. It's time to teach children they can have fun without being greedy.

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Opening packages is part of the fun of holidays. Let them practice now. Get out all the wrapping paper. Satiate them with the experience in advance. Get paper, ribbon and any boxes you have saved. Get scotch tape and let them wrap up anything they want – old toys, trash, cups. Get the television's remote control out of the way.

When you see your little one with his tongue in the corner of his mouth and a foot of scotch tape running from his shirt to his wad of wrapping paper, you realize he is gaining some appreciation for the effort parents take wrapping presents in the wee hours of the night.

Put children to work by cutting or tearing out magazine pictures of toys they would like, then teach economizing with kindness. If you want your child to care about the family budget, you don't have to say, "You can't have it all." Tell your child what he or she can have. "You can have this many toys ."

Some children want what they see a child bring to school for sharing time, which is often a day to brag about possessions. They want toys to be able to compete with other children's toys. Little ones have a primitive need to be powerful by owning lots of things.

Some presents don't cost much but will be lots of fun, even if no one saw them advertised on the TV.

1. Dozens of soft balls (crochet 6 granny squares that you make into a ball stuffed with pillow stuffing. It's great to do while you are watching television.) Get all the odd socks and roll them into a ball and sew them up. Children love collections of things and if they are mad when there are no more presents to open, then can throw them – harmlessly, because they are soft balls for inside play.

2. Get some doll clothes for a favorite doll, or stuffed toy. Barbie clothes are easy to find. Clothes that fit other dolls take some looking. Maybe you can settle

for a lunch box for teddy or the baby doll.

3. Get a costume like Batwoman, Batman, Superman or Cinderella. Children love playing the role of powerful mystical characters.

4. Take a coffee can and decorate it for a Friday sweets treat day. Make that the day everyone in the family gets to pig out and have a candy bar. Include some new tooth brushes in it, as well as the goodies. The rest of the week can be sugar free.

If we want civilized children who live good lives on this earth, we can start helping them to not over-consume. After all, many toys only get used two times – once when it is new and once when someone else wants to use it.

Plan ahead, so the holidays have less tension, and more wonder.

EARLY CONSISTENT CARE VS CRIME

Curing crime in the world starts with the cradle. It worries citizens all over the world to know about criminals who are caught after vandalizing a school, or shooting from a car. It's tempting to blame criminal behavior on television or the neighbor's children. But these influences are secondary.

The attachments formed early in life provide the security a human child needs in order to learn to be human.

Early childhood educators who watch children from birth to five, know what is needed to produce a child with a conscience who will not be a criminal. It starts with consistency.

Infants need care from the same person or persons almost every day. If two many people come and go in the infant care center, or the home, a baby doesn't learn who he or she belongs to. It takes lots of time with a few people for the infant to trust that the world is a safe place. The attachments formed early in life provide the security a human child needs in order to learn to be human.

A child learns to love mother or father or caretakers or all of them. When he or she is a toddler and interacting with others, that love and trust is a basis for the beginning of a sense of right and wrong.

It begins to matter, that grandmother is really upset because the two year old child bit someone. It matters to the child that mother agreed with the preschool teacher that dumping sand on someone's head was not kind. It makes the four year old stop and listen, if father has a talk with the teacher about what is expected when she is reading a story. People the child loves care about behavior and the

child cares about them.

Shifting the child's care around to many different people, interferes with the setting needed to produce the attachments between the child and these significant people.

This information can be hard on working caring parents. No one wants the housekeeper to leave or the child care center teacher to get another job. These events are worse than tax season anywhere.

Child care workers always know when a family member is out of town or o[illegible]of the marriage. And parents know when the staff h[illegible] changed at the preschool. Children do not like the changes and they react to them. Children need stability.

Caring parents who want children with a conscience, do well to help children recover from those unexpected losses they experience. They can re-establish trust.

Infants need more rocking time with mother and some reassurance that the new caregiver is ok.

Helping preschool age children get used to a child care center is often an on going task. If a person who is important to the child leaves, it might require a mother or father to take time to visit the center an hour or so, to reassure the child they know what it is like to be there. It's a good time to admire the child's skills on the jungle gym, or the easel. Strong ties take time.

Supporting the child's preschool facility as much as possible, enhances the child's security and may even keep a teacher happier with her work.

When some children feel their security threatened, they get very quiet and are too good. Others get very noisy and disruptive.

Any child who has experienced the loss of someone who is important to them, needs help to keep trust alive and be reassured that he matters to the people he or she loves.

A good start needs a lot of care. And that's what assures us that conscience will grow in children. It starts in the cradle.

SOMETIMES TERRIFIC PARENTS HAVE TERRIBLE KIDS

Maybe you are a parent who notices that every young child at the birthday party seems to have given up the gift they brought to the birthday child without argument, eaten the cake with joy, and accepted a little favor with a smile. But

The fact is, children are born with certain temperaments and yours can be one of those with a difficult one.

your child may be the one who is in a bad mood and tackling someone, after being forced to give up the present he or she brought and finding he did not like the cake.

If it seems to happen all the time, it doesn't mean you have a bad child, though you may often feel impelled to say, "He was born this way." You may hear others say, "Maybe she's getting sick," or imagine them saying something you don't want to hear.

The fact is, children are born with certain temperaments and yours can be one of those with a difficult one. Chances are good that you've tried just as hard as any other parent to bring your child into a beginning state of civilization. When parents don't get positive feedback from children, it's hard on them and they should be given credit for hanging in there. Besides appreciation, parents need some explanations and directions. The difficult to raise child may have a difficult to live with nervous system.

Some children seem to have brains that periodically misfire into explosive reactions. Some don't respond to the hugging you want to give, but don't mind going around the child care center like linemen all day. Others get like Harpo Marx and won't talk in public. Being a parent of a difficult child may only seem easy when the child is sleeping and you can have uninterrupted time to see how cute he or she really is. Raising a challenging child can be like trying to learn a computer program without a manual.

Experts in child development can readily tell you that you don't need to feel any worse than you already do. The first thing to do is admit the child is a hard one to handle, then go for a diagnosis. Describe your child's behavior to your doctor and see if he wants to send you for an evaluation to a pediatrician who is a specialist in neurology. You need to really find out what makes this child tick. Some public school systems in the USA have State funds to test your preschool child without cost to you and that can be a beginning as well.

If there is nothing about your child outside the broad range of normal, you may want to find a good parent education teacher to give you some techniques for dealing with your child's temperament and making him or her more fun to be with while you're both awake. There are counseling centers in some communities that will charge for testing on a sliding fee scale. Counselors can help parents anderstand child management better.

Never mind about those calm children at the birthday party, they may be "only children." Their parents might get their own hard to raise child one day and need your help for tackling problems if you learned some pointers on how to raise the difficult child.

NEWER THOUGHTS ABOUT DISCIPLINE

Whether it's a preschool, middle school or high school, the people who plan programs for parent involvement have a hard time getting an audience. It's not that parents don't care or are lazy. Today's parents are over-stressed. As one mother put it, "The only time I ever have to myself is when I'm in the shower." Parents would rather sell t-shirts for a fund raiser to everyone in their office, than go to school at night for a program. Nonetheless, offer a speaker who will talk about discipline and there is bound to be a full house.

It's best to stay clear of anything that makes children want rewards so much that they will tattle on each other for a prize, rather than cooperate.

Here's the latest idea about discipline. Watch that praise! Tired as parents get, most know the idea that catching the kids doing something (anything) right means you should praise profusely. Then they will want to do more things right. Wrong. Getting children addicted to an adult's praise can mean they don't learn to care about each other, just adults. It's best to watch for children's random acts of kindness and point out how it makes others feel well.

Giving rewards gets a bad grade these days as well. Children who are frequently rewarded with things turn out to be less generous than other children the researchers say. They learn that the only reason you give something is to get something.

It's best to stay clear of anything that makes children want rewards so much that they will tattle on each other for a prize, rather than cooperate. It's true of the corporate world as well. Group moral and group dedication to high standards is what makes some companies do well on the stock market these days. Being decent pays off.

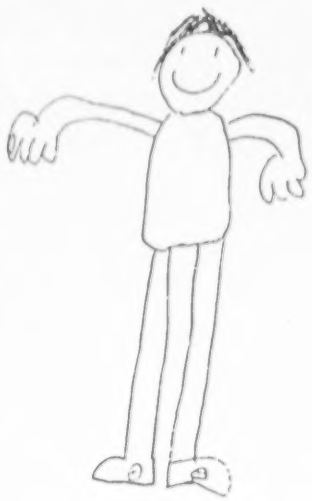
Directing children's attention to the way their behavior affects the people around them is the way to go.

"I'm looking at your face and it's so angry. Look at mine, does it show you

how upset I am? We need to talk about this."

At preschool a child sneaks a cracker to the child next to him at the lunch table. "Oh, you make her happy," says the teacher. To wrestling children she says, "I can tell by your faces that you are having fun." Soon she may need to say, "Look at him, does he look like that hurts?"

Stop, look and think. It's as important as the fire drill that says stop, drop and roll. In a world where guns are so readily available, it is dangerous for little children to grow up still acting on impulses. Whatever adults can do to get children to behave from an inner need to do the right thing, is better than conforming because someone is watching or is ready with the m and m's. What happens when no one is watching and the candy is gone? None of us should be so stressed out we don't discipline with care and thoughtfulness.



It's a good idea to budget monthly and plan for a certain percent of your income for the gifts and set up a criteria for what you will purchase.

SETTING HOLIDAY STANDARDS EARLY

Buying things for your baby may be harder to resist than chocolate chip cookies but parents with low budgets and high values might start thinking about holiday spending right now.

Thinking economically is wise, as you begin to set traditions and standards in your new family.

A great set of blocks is right in your waste basket. Save all your milk cartons. Rinse them well and cut them with a single edge razor blade. If you push one inside the other you have a good block. You'll discover you can vary the size of the blocks. Invest in contact paper and cover them so you won't be embarrassed when the in-laws see them under the Christmas tree or around the Hanukkah candles.

It's a good idea to budget monthly and plan for a certain percent of your income for the gifts and set up a criteria for what you will purchase. Battery operated toys usually cost more and interfere with a child's development of imagination.

Baby Bug Magazine will give you quality reading every 6 weeks when it comes and make up for the times you can't get to the store or the library for new material. This boardbook magazine reminds you of nursery rhymes you can say to your child, teaches you some new ones and is always appropriate to the interests of your diapered child. The illustrations reflect many different art styles. Subscribing to it early, means you might have several to wrap up for the holidays.

Many new parents begin to have an increased sense of responsibility about the world into which they have brought their baby. Values become more clearly defined. Will consumerism be replaced by conservation? Remembering that shop keepers need to sell things to pay their employers who have families may keep a parent from being too strict.

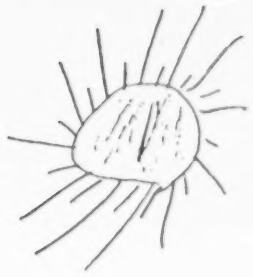
Moms who remember the part of Little Women where the family gives away their Christmas food to the poor family need to think carefully about teaching altruism to a child. When parents of young children give away things to other people, it takes a great deal of preparation for the children to understand that they are not neglected while a stranger is being favored. Before some time in grammar school, little children can't conserve the idea that parents care for them, while handling the idea that parents can care for others at the same time. They feel unlucky rather than seeing the "poor person" as unlucky. When the brain is ready, the heart follows.

Plan ahead sensibly now, and look forward to the fun and a few chocolate chip cookies as well.

COLOR ME CREATIVE

Everyone gets excited when a baby learns to say a word, or takes a first step. An equally important milestone in development takes place when a preschooler draws a "person." True, it looks like a tadpole, or a snowman more than mommy, who he said it was, but child development experts say this is an important event. After all, the child had to make the lines form a circle and to represent a face. It doesn't matter that the arms come out of the head. The more he draws, the better it gets. Around age seven, the child will draw a neck.

Children's drawings are exciting to them. They have recorded what they know. It's an important form of communication.



Getting the skill to draw a circle means the child will eventually form letters and do writing. The drawings show adults that a child's intellect is maturing. Look for the tadpole "humanoids" around four years of age, presuming you haven't interfered with your child's learning.

It takes a lot of scribbling to learn to make circles, straight lines, and other shapes. The practice is as important to writing as crawling is to walking. Parents who get excited about the scribbles are being good teachers. Allowing children lots of paper, crayons, and paint is important. It will keep early efforts off the walls for one thing. If marking pens are included in the media, they should not be flavored or be permanent markers, as these are dangerous. A pencil or pen can be supervised, especially while waiting for dinner in a restaurant which has paper table mats the child can scribble on.

If children are given coloring books and get the idea they are supposed to color someone else's drawings, they don't get the practice needed to learn to make their own. All children are artists, so all parents took pleasure in drawing at one time. If something happened in school that made you say "I can't draw," take a look at your child's efforts--tadpoles, already.

EVERYONE LEARNS IN A SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Most adults know it these days. If you can't understand what your computer is doing it's a good idea to ask the first twelve year old you can find for some help.

A school is a community of learners. Everyone is a student of someone else.

Children are getting savvy about technology as fast as they learn to climb fences and jump rope. Adults should relax about it. The latest idea about a school is that it is a community of learners.

That means something you always knew anyway. The PTA president probably has a recipe the kindergarten teacher needs for gingerbread. A classroom aide may abe able to help the principal with the Spanish words for happy birthday for his newsletter.

It's a fact today: a computer savvy four year old can help the preschool teacher who is facing, for the first time, the keyboard of the PC they got from the last school fund raiser. She can't read directions to learn what that icon is and watch out for who's pretending to be the Power Rangers at the same time. She needs a teacher too.

Preschool teachers can explain to first time parents that all two year olds tend to throw things that they are finished with. They will learn to pick up for Mother Earth and public sanitation eventually.

Directors go to early childhood education conferences and they can tell teachers the latest information they got on the relationship between reading and block play. Teachers tell directors what they learned about mouth, hand and foot disease in their Red Cross class.

It's always been true. A school is a community of learners. Everyone is a student of of someone else. So if a two year old says, "Big dinosaur in der," pointing to the hole he dug in the sand, the teacher better go and see what she can learn.

THE CHILDREN'S CLOTHES CIRCUIT IN PRESCHOOLS

If your child's preschool allows children to go barefoot, it can be horrendous finding those shoes and socks when you're in a hurry to pick your child up and get home. They are supposed to be in the child's "cubby", but that personal cubicle usually has one sock, the lunch box if you are lucky and a small collection of things like one feather, a dead geranium, a few little rocks.

It's good if you find your little one with the shoes and socks on. If he or she seems heavy for the greeting hug, it's probably because the shoes are filled with sand. Going barefoot is healthy for the feet, not the rushed parent.

A busy parent has the choice of emptying the sand, then looking for the sweater. That's why the Lost and Found looks as big as an African termite's nest at most places that care for young children.

Marking pens are cheaper than a trip to purchase new clothes.

Don't get mad at the teachers. Chances are they have already asked, " Whose shoes and one sock?" Children who would happily emulate the Persian Gulf war over a puzzle piece they think is theirs, habitually look blank when their sock or sweater is displayed. Maybe they know mommy will just have to buy a new one. Teachers know parents will do anything but mark a name on children's belongings. Preschools short on space periodically have to take pounds of socks and clothes to the Salvation Army, or donate them to the Homeless.

Lots of teachers with good memories and a sharp eye know what garment came off of what child, what item belongs to whom. But if there is a lot to watch at preschool, like a cooking project or a new child that bites, belongings must be a teacher's last priority. Then too, if she goes on her break at nap time, and a blanket falls on the floor, along with the sand filled socks, her substitute may swoop it all up at the end of that period and so the "lost and found" grows.

Marking pens are cheaper than a trip to purchase new clothes. Teachers everywhere would love it if children had big names printed on their things. A surname labeled on belongings is best for preschoolers. Parents don't want strangers knowing their child's name while they walk in the mall. If little children do know their last names, they don't respond to them any faster than to the question "Who does this belong to?"

Maybe they are smarter and kinder than we think and just want to help the homeless.

TO OUR READERS AND WEB SURFERS

First Step Nursery School is an independent child care center. In 1986 it was among the first in California to be accredited by the Academy of Early Childhood Education, an arm of the prestigious National Association for the Education of Young Children.

First Step's mission is to provide quality, developmentally appropriate child care that nourishes children, their parents and their teachers, and still pays the rent. It hasn't been easy, but we're still smiling and want to share what we've learned. What can we learn from you who are teachers, mothers, fathers, family home day care providers, directors, and adults whose early care was shared with others? Write us on paper, or the web.

On the Web: Articles by Bette Simons, for parents and child care workers to copy include: How To Choose Child Care, Biting, When Children Say "You Can't Play," In-Laws Who Are Outlaws, Bullies, Crying Children and Guilty Goodbyes, What Parents And Child Care Centers Don't Tell Each Other, and much more.

To order books by Bette Simons: Send $10.95 for each title. This includes handling, California tax and domestic postage.

WINNING AT CHILD CARING: Easier ways with young children in child care centers, homes and malls. The Creative Book Company, Panorama City, CA 1997

CHILD CARE FOR DIAPERED CHILDREN: Happier ways to share the caring of infants, toddlers and twos. The Creative Book Company, Panorama City, CA 1997

WINNING WAYS WITH PRESCHOOL DIRECTORS, PARENTS AND TOUGH KIDS: First aid for the bad situations child care workers face while caring for young children. The Creative Book Company, Panorama City, CA 1997

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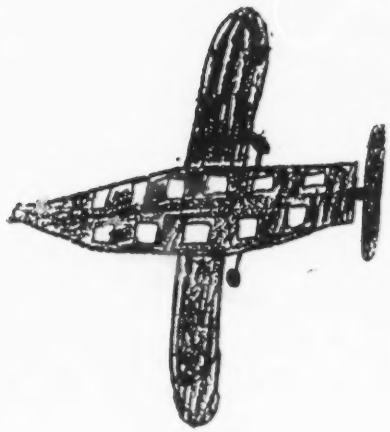

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When she is pleased or frustrated about an issue of the care of young children, she writes about it in her column for The Warner Center News, that published most of the articles found in WINNING AT CHILD CARING. She has raised her three children and lives with her husband in Sherman Oaks, California.

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